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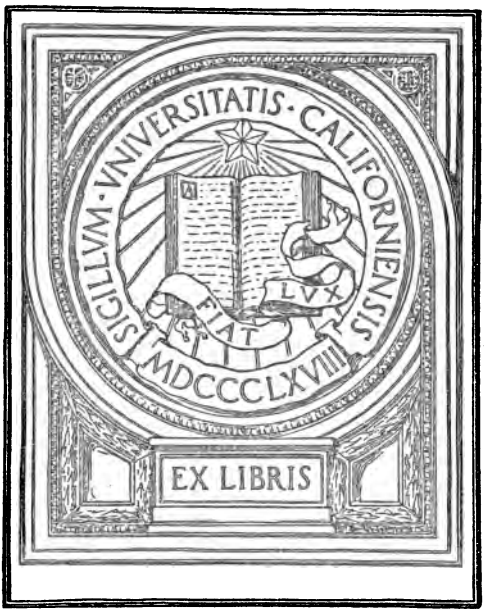
WHIFFS FROM WILD MEADOW

JOHN WALTER FOSS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WHIFFS

FROM

WILD MEADOWS

BY

SAM WALTER FOSS

AUTHOR OF "BACK COUNTRY POEMS"

ILLUSTRATED

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
1905

The poems entitled "Sambo Washington's Vindication," "Gideon Gaskins's Deaths," "The Fate of Pious Dan," "The Vision That Recedes," "A Modern Malthusian," "The Song of the Brook," "Fate," "The Battle in the Mist," "The Voyage," and "My Sabbaths" are used in this volume through the courtesy of the *New York Sun*. The poems entitled "The Songless Poet," "A Back-yard Philosopher," "The Big Four and the Little Man" are used by the kind permission of *The Golden Rule*.

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WHIFFS FROM WILD MEADOWS

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TO

SAXTON AND MOLLIE

M191931

Ah, there are many average men,
And all so good and bad, like you,
And all so bad and good, like me;
And all so false and all so true,
So full of joy and misery —
Should not a poet now and then
Make songs to glad these average men?

Look in the hearts of average men, —
The tragedies of doom are there;
And comedies of glad delight,
And hopeless wailings of despair, - -
And hopes and sorrows infinite —
Shall not a poet now and then
Look in the hearts of average men?

Look in the lives of average men —
The baby lulled by cradle songs,
The hopeful youth serenely brave,
The toiler in the toiling throngs,
The coffin at the open grave —
May not a poet now and then
Reveal these lives of average men?

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WHIFFS FROM WILD MEADOWS

BEHIND THE HILL

My boy was young; he could not know
The way earth's wayward currents flow,
And so, in early shallows bound,
His mis-manned shallop ran aground.
He grew ashamed of his disgrace,
He could not look me in the face;
"For, mother, every man," said he,
"Has scorn, and only scorn, for me.
I must go forth with alien men,
And grapple with the world again;
I cannot stay and face the truth
Among the people of my youth.
Where men are strange, and scenes are new,
There may be work for me to do.
And, when I have redeemed the past,
I will come back to you at last."
And so I watched while my boy Will
Went down behind the hill.

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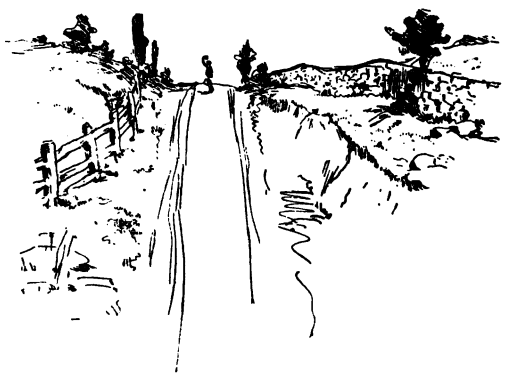
He climbed the hill at early morn
Beneath whose shadow he was born;
He stood upon its highest place,
The sunrise shining on his face;
He stood there, but too far away
For me to see his tears that day.



My thoughts, my fears, I cannot tell
When he waved back his sad farewell,
And then passed on, and my boy Will
Went down behind the hill.

Went down the hill; henceforth for me
One picture in my memory
Crowds every other from its place, —
A boy with sunrise on his face.

His sunrise-lighted face I see,—
The sunset of all joy to me;
For when he turned him from my sight
The morning mixed itself with night,
And darkness came when my boy Will
Went down behind the hill.

The world is wide, and he has gone
Into its vastness, on and on.
I know not what besets his path,
What hours of gloom, what days of wrath,
What terrors menace him afar,
What nights of storm without a star,
What mountains loom above his way,
What oceans toss him night and day,
What fever blasts from desert sands,
What death-cold winds from frozen lands,
What shafts of sleet or sun may blight
My homeless wanderer in his flight;
I only know the world is wide,
And he can roam by land and tide.
'Tis wide, ah, me! in every part,
But narrower than his mother's heart,—
A joyless heart since my boy Will
Went down behind the hill.

I know he bravely fights with fate,
But, ah, the hour is growing late!

I watch the hill by day and night,
It dimly looms before my sight,
And fast the twilight shadows fall,
The night is glooming over all;
But in my boy a faith is given
As saints of old had faith in heaven.
I know that he will come again,
His praise on all the lips of men;
He will come back to me at last
With deeds that shall redeem the past;
Nor desert plain, nor mountain steep,
Nor storm nor thunder on the deep,
Nor tempest in the east or west,
Shall hold him from his mother's breast.
And, though the world grows blind and dumb,
I feel, I know, that he will come;
And I am waiting for him still,
And watch the summit of the hill.
Sometimes I think I see him stand
And wave a welcome with his hand;
But 'tis a cloud upon the rim
Of sunset — and my eyes are dim —
'Tis but a mist made by the tears
That thicken with the growing years.
I watch while there is light to see,
And dream that he will come to me;
And though 'tis dark within, without,
I will not shame him by a doubt;

The all-enfolding night draws near,
But he will come — I will not fear —
But, ah, 'tis long since my boy Will
Went down behind the hill!

THE POUND-KEEPER

In our district, years ago,
Were boys the great world ought to know.
Joe Bean could draw upon his slate
Fine pictures that we all called great;
And after school he passed it round,
And then our wonder was profound.
"They'll beat," said Squire Erastus Brown,
"Most any chromo in the town.
He'll make an artist, sure as fate,
Of whom, some day, we'll all be proud."
But Joe moved to another State —
And then got lost in the crowd.

In the same district Israel Finn
Could play upon the violin;
And when he fiddled, all us boys
Would gather round to hear the noise.
Sam Craig, who'd been to Boston, and
Heard the best fiddlers in the land, —
He said straight out that he should call
Young Israel Finn the best of all.
When he grew up and moved away

His genius was by all allowed;
We said, "The world will hear him play"—
But he got lost in the crowd.

In the same district Ezra Prime
Was a great hand to make a rhyme.
From him the poetry seemed to flow,
Like spring brooks fed with melted snow;
And Jed Drew, who had read a lots,
And knew the hymns of Isaac Watts,
Said he'd no doubt that Ezra Prime
Would be the poet of his time.
But Ezra left us, like the rest.
We said, "His fame will echo loud
From north to south, from east to west,"—
But he got lost in the crowd.

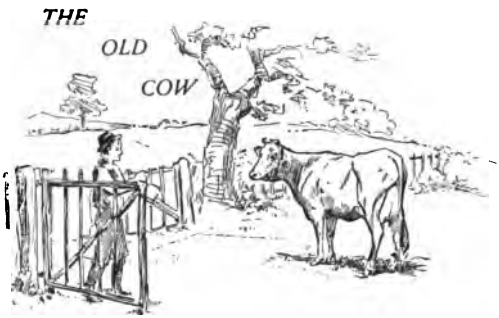
In the same district Abr'am Beach
Most any time could make a speech;
And our old school-committee man,
Who once had heard the "Godlike Dan,"
Said, "Webster made a splendid sound,
And threw his voice for miles around;
'Twould fill a thousand acre lot—
But Abr'am knocked him out for thought!"
So he couldn't stay in such a town,
Where us poor fellows hoed and ploughed.

He went to seek a world renown —
  But he got lost in the crowd.

There was a man named Robert Burns,
Who lived among the grass and ferns,
Who did hard work with his right arm,
And raised good verses on his farm;
And while he lived and farmed it there,
His poetry crop was pretty fair.
Sometimes we move on faster, see?
By simply staying where we be.
The crowd is large, and men are small,
  And heaped together, like a cloud, —
And he is pretty middling tall
  Who is not lost in the crowd.

There was a man whose name was Grant,
Who grew, like an obscure plant,
For forty years, and blossomed late,
Then burst, a full-blown flower of fate.
This backwood teamster drove his team
Right through red War's blood-swollen stream,
Right through the smoke and battle roar,
And hitched it at the White House door.
He stayed at home, and worked away
  Till the time called, and called *him*, loud,
Then buckled on his sword one day,
  And *found* himself in the crowd.

But why take Grant and Burns? take me,
Born here, raised here, and here I be;
But still my fellow-townsmen found
No better man to run the Pound.
And I want you to note it down,
I'm king of every cow in town,
And all the heifers that you see,
They stand in mortal awe of me.
I stayed right here, and worked at home,
And all the town of me is proud.
I had no hankering to roam —
And *didn't* get lost in the crowd.



I USED to go a-milking when the shades of night were falling,
And the sunset's benediction sanctified the evening air,
When the crickets from the thickets in their piping strains were calling,
And the twilight peace was brooding, softly brooding, everywhere.
But the twilight peace I felt not, night's odorous balm I smelt not,
And the black night gloomed about me with a melancholy frown.
When I strained each manual muscle in an agonizing tussle,
But the old cow wouldn't "give down,"
Ah!
The old cow wouldn't "give down!"

O Brindle ! most lactiferous of all the herd herbivorous,
Nearly always non-withholding, grandly generous wert thou.
No cow grazes with such praises, for thy praises were vociferous,
For thou wert our most beloved and our most belauded cow.
But sometimes all unapplauded, unbeloved, unbelauded,
Did our looks of admiration darken to a gloomy frown ;
Yes, our looks were black and baleful when we went to get a pailful —
And the old cow wouldn't "give down,"
Ah !
The old cow wouldn't "give down."

Milking since has been my mission, and my cow is young ambition,
And I've milked her night and morning, milked her early, milked her late ;
But my butter (sad to utter), my sweet butter of fruition,
Does my most persistent churning often fail to concentrate.
Though my milking seat's adjusted, still my cow cannot be trusted,

And the smile of fickle fortune often darkens to a frown,
When I pull with tearful traction, but I get no satisfaction —
For my old cow won't "give down,"
Ah!
My old cow won't "give down."

And all ye who read this jingle, who peruse this lilting lyric,
Will ye say, "His cow was stubborn when he botched that verse, the clown?"
You can say, who read this lyric, if you wish to be satiric,
"When the author wrote that lyric, why, his cow would not 'give down.'
Though he milked with much compulsion, and he strained with great convulsion,
She heeded not his prodding, heeded not his kick or frown;
And she showed the bard no pity when he tried to milk this ditty,
And his old cow wouldn't 'give down,'
Ah!
His old cow wouldn't 'give down.'"

SAMBO WASHINGTON'S VINDICATION.

He stood before the church committee
In calm, complacent bravery,
Though charged with many heinous crimes
And various kinds of knavery.
"Now, Sambo Washington," they said,
"You're charged with great obliquities,
With sundry crimes at various times,
And many grave iniquities."
"Yes, sah," said Sambo Washington,
"Ise done some frauds perdigious;
But, bress de Lawd! for ebery fraud
Was pious an' religious.

"Ise done kermitted var'ous crimes,
An' sins er great variety;
But ebery sin dat I has done
I done for troof an' piety."
"But how about John Gray's gold pen?
Also his gold penholder?"
Then Sambo grew the size of two,
And answered frank and bolder,
"A pious feelin' tuk me, Jedge,
An' I could not control it.

Wif dat pen, Jedge, I signed de pledge;
An' dat was why I stole it."

"But Enoch Hardy's watch and chain?"
"I stole um, Jedge, fum Hardy.
Befo' dat date Ise allus late
To Sunday-school, an' tardy.
But, bress de Lawd! dat ar gol' watch
Am bery akkerit, bery;
No mo' Ise late an' after date
In His great sanctuary.
I reach in time de house ob pra'r,
No mo' is I belated;
An', bress my soul! dat watch I stole,
To troof am consecrated."

"But how about that suit of clothes?"
"Dat soot," said Sambo, rising,
"I stole dat soot to serve de Lawd
An' wear at my baptizin'."
"But how about those two fat fowls?"
"I tuk dem fowls, yo' Honah,
Fum ol' John Bell, a infidel,
A scoffah, an' a scornah;
Fum dat bad, unbelievin' man,
Dat unregenerit sinner,
Dem fowls I stole fum dat lost soul
Fer Elder Putnam's dinner."

Justin Bloom and Gontoseed

On this wide planet there is room
For men of opposite creed;
There's room for Mr. Justin Bloom
And Mr. Gontoseed.
For both these mortals there is need,
For both there's ample room,
Though Justin Bloom hates Gontoseed,
And Gontoseed hates Bloom.

"Out from the dead past's darkened gloom
I march to break of day;
I face the sun," says Justin Bloom,
"Tap drums, and march away!"

"The wisdom of the ancient days
Serves all my spirit's need;
I keep the good old precious ways,"
Says Mr. Gontoseed.

And Justin Bloom, if left alone,
Would set the world on fire;
And Gontoseed, and all his breed,
Would stagnate in the mire.
While one would plunge in the abyss,
One saunter on the grass,
One holds back from the precipice,
One leaps the wide morass.

Though one is full of rest and sleep,
And one is full of noise,
They both together work to keep
The world in equipoise.
On this wide planet there is room
For both; and both we need.
Three cheers, three cheers for Justin Bloom!
Three cheers for Gontoseed!

THE CONFESSIONS OF A LUNKHEAD

I'M a lunkhead, an' I know it; 'tain't no use to squirm an' talk,
I'm a gump an' I'm a lunkhead, I'm a lummux, I'm a gawk.
An' I make this interduction so thet all you folks can see
An' understan' the natur' of the critter thet I be.

I allus wobble w'en I walk, my j'ints are out er gear,
My arms go flappin' through the air, jest like an el'phunt's ear;
An' w'en a womern speaks to me I stutter an' grow weak,
A big frog rises in my throat, an' he won't let me speak.

Wall, thet's the kind er thing I be; but in our neighborhood
Lived young Joe Craig an' young Jim Stump an' Hiram Underwood.
We growed like corn in the same hill, jest like four sep'rit stalks;

For they wuz lunkheads, jest like me, an' lummuxes an' gawks.

Now, I knew I wuz a lunkhead; but them fellers didn' know,
Thought they wuz the bigges' punkins an' the purtiest in the row.
An' I, I uster laff an' say, "Them lunkhead chaps will see
W'en they go out into the worl' w'at gawky things they be."

Joe Craig, he wuz a lunkhead, but it didn' get through his pate;
I guess you've all heerd tell of him — he's gov'nor of the State!
Jim Stump, he blundered off to war — a most uncommon gump —
Didn' know enough to know it — an' he come home General Stump.

Then Hiram Underwood went off, the bigges' gawk of all,
We thought him hardly bright enough to share in Adam's fall;
But he tried the railroad biz'ness, an' he allus grabbed his share,—

Now this gawk who didn't know it is a fifty millionaire.

An' often out here hoein' I set down atween the stalks,
Thinkin' how we four together all were lummuxes an' gawks,
All were gumps an' all were lunkheads, only they didn' know, yer see;
An' I ask, "If I hadn' known it, where in natur' would *I* be?"

For I stayed to home an' rastled in the cornfiel', like a chump,
Coz I knew I wuz a lunkhead an' a lummux an' a gump;
But if on'y I hadn' known it, like them other fellers there,
To-day I might be settin' in the presidential chair.

We all are lunkheads — don't git mad — an' lummuxes an' gawks;
But us poor chaps who know we be — we walk in humble walks.
So, I say to all good lunkheads, Keep yer own selves in the dark;
Don't own or reckernize the fact, an' you will make yer mark.

FIXING THE OLD THING RIGHT

SAID Adam unto Seth, his son,
"My boy, my life is nearly done;
I am the first man ever made,
And yet a failure, I'm afraid.
And you, my boy, must bring to men
Your father's Eden back again.
You must correct our great mistake,
Our foolish blunder with the snake.
The world has wandered from the light;
Go in and fix the old thing right."

Said Seth to Enos, his first born,
"My boy, your life is in its morn;
You've scarcely passed from boyhood's stage,
You're but four hundred years of age.
I've struggled on through hopes and fears,
And lived above five hundred years;
And now I feel that there can be
But a few centuries more for me.
I've tried my prettiest since my birth
To steer and regulate the earth;

But all of Nature's plan, I fear,
Is pretty badly out of gear.
So, while I travel toward the night,
Go in and fix the old thing right."

Said Enos unto Cainan, "Lad,
I fear the world is growing bad·

But when I see before me spread
Your large development of head,
And know you deem all wisdom shut
And focussed in your occiput,
I feel that here is one at last
Who should redeem the wretched past;
And so I say, take up the fight,
Go in and fix the old thing right."

Said Cainan to Mahalaleel,
"The envious years upon me steal,

And now I feel as old and dried
As father Enos when he died.
Though I possessed, as father said,
A large development of head,
The world would 'haw' when I said 'gee,'
And 'gee' when I said 'haw.' Ah, me!
I've tried for these nine hundred years
To drive this balky yoke of steers;
And now I pass the goad to you,
To do the best that you can do.
And when old Cainan fades from sight,
Go in and fix the old thing right."

Mahalaleel to Jared said,
"My son, 'tis time that I were dead;
And in this view of mine, I guess,
You too have come to acquiesce.
The world has reached a sorry plight;"
Go in and fix the old thing right."

So Jared, when his life was done,
The same to Enoch talked, his son.
And Enoch, like a faithful pa,
The same to young Methuselah,
Who near a thousand years of strife
Mourned o'er the brevity of life,
And said to Lamech, "Life is short,
And very little I have wrought,

Though I might make the world sublime
And perfect, if I had the time.
But in my life's contracted span
I have but merely just began;
No earthly power my life can save,
I seek my premature grave.
My son, take up the unfinished fight;
Go in and fix the old thing right."

Soon Lamech left the world to Noah,
Just as his fathers had before.
And then the Flood came on to rout
And drown the whole Creation out;
Though all had tried with main and might,
They failed to fix the old thing right.

But when a man is born to-day,
He starts out in the good old way,
And bravely works from dawn till night,
To try to fix the old thing right.
The same old lightning in the blood
That thrilled men's hearts before the Flood,
Drives all men to the endless fight,
To try and fix the old thing right.
And though the clouds of doubt draw nigh,
And shut the sun from out the sky,
And though life marches through the gloom
To music of the steps of doom,

A voice comes through the darkness far,
And smites the cloud-wrack like a star,
And makes its thunder-blackness bright,
"Go in and fix the old thing right."

HE WORRIED ABOUT IT

THE sun's heat will give out in ten million years more, —
And he worried about it.
It will sure give out then, if it doesn't before —
And he worried about it.
It will surely give out, so the scientists said
In all scientifical books he had read,
And the whole boundless universe then will be dead —
And he worried about it.

And some day the earth will fall into the sun —
And he worried about it —
Just as sure and as straight as if shot from a gun —
And he worried about it.
"When strong gravitation unbuckles her straps,
Just picture," he said, "what a fearful collapse!
It will come in a few million ages perhaps" —
And he worried about it.

And the earth will become much too small for the race —
And he worried about it —

When we'll pay thirty dollars an inch for pure space —
And he worried about it.
The earth will be crowded so much, without doubt,
There won't be room for one's tongue to stick out,
Nor room for one's thoughts to wander about —
And he worried about it.

And the Gulf Stream will curve, and New England grow torrider —
And he worried about it —
Than was ever the climate of southernmost Florida —
And he worried about it.
Our ice crop will be knocked into small smithereens,
And crocodiles block up our mowing-machines,
And we'll lose our fine crops of potatoes and beans —
And he worried about it.

And in less than ten thousand years, there's no doubt —
And he worried about it —
Our supply of lumber and coal will give out —
And he worried about it.
Just then the ice-age will return cold and raw,
Frozen men will stand stiff with arms outstretched in awe,
As if vainly beseeching a general thaw —
And he worried about it.

His wife took in washing — half a dollar a day —
He didn't worry about it —
His daughter sewed shirts the rude grocer to pay —
He didn't worry about it.
While his wife beat her tireless rub-a-dub-dub
On the washboard drum of her old wooden tub,
He sat by the stove, and he just let her rub —
He didn't worry about it.

HAYTOWN'S BOOM

THEY said that Haytown would just boom when
Dorkins's creamery came,
And take its place upon the map with other
towns of fame;
They talked as if this creamery, when on the
town it burst,
Would start another Eden more salubrious than
the first.

And so, day after day, the town to Badger's store
would flock,
And hold a glorious fast from work, and have a
feast of talk;
Through years of hopeful waiting did these tillers
of the soil
Keep up a maximum of talk, a minimum of toil.

And so, at last, when Dorkins came, the impe-
cunious crowd
All went to him beseeching loans, with pleadings
long and loud;
And Dorkins dropped at every tale the sympa-
thetic tear,

And also dropped his precious cash, and failed
up in a year.

And then the rumor spread abroad, a railroad
would come down
From Cheltenham to Yonkersville, and pass right
through the town;
And they all thought the earliest train would
bring the town success,
Would bring down the millennium, prepaid, by
fast express.

They talked as if the freight trains through each
man's yard would roar,
And bring round bars of solid gold to drop at
each man's door;
And every man at Badger's store was burdened
with the care
Of how he'd spend his money when he grew a
millionaire.

And after many weary years the railroad did come
down,
And half the people took this chance to just
move out of town;
And they all reasoned thankfully, "Why should
we longer stay,
When Providence has furnished such a means to
get away?"

But all the men who stayed behind soon had another tale,
How 'twas proposed in Haytown to erect the county jail.
"The jail is coming!" shouted all, the matron, man, and boy.
"The jail is coming!" and the town did effervesce with joy.

"And when the jail shall come," they said,
"'twill give the town a boom,
Our fame shall go to all the world loud as the crack of doom;
And all the country round about shall envy us afar,
A good two-story granite jail will give us grand *éclat!*"

And in two years the jail was built, a landmark highly prized,
And the best hopes of Haytown then were fully realized;
The hopes involved in this new jail, like others did not fail,
For soon one-half the town secured apartments in the jail.

LAND ON YOUR FEET

You take a cat up by the tail,
  And whirl him round and round,
And hurl him out into the air,
  Out into space profound,
He through the yielding atmosphere
  Will many a whirl complete;
But when he strikes upon the ground
  He'll land upon his feet.

Fate takes a man, just like a cat,
  And, with more force than grace,
It whirls him wiggling round and round,
  And hurls him into space;
And those that fall upon the back,
  Or land upon the head,
Fate lets them lie there where they fall —
  They're just as good as dead.

But some there be that, like the cat,
  Whirl round and round and round,
And go gyrating off through space,
  Until they strike the ground;

But when at last the ground and they
  Do really come to meet,
You'll always find them right side up —
  They land upon their feet.

And such a man walks off erect,
  Triumphant and elate,
And with a courage in his heart
  He shakes his fist at fate;
Then fate with a benignant smile
  Upon its face outspread,
Puts forth its soft, caressing hand
  And pats him on the head.

And he's fate's darling from that day,
  His triumph is complete;
Fate loves the man who whirls and whirls,
  But lands upon his feet.
That man, whate'er his ups and downs,
  Is never wholly spurned,
Whose perpendicularity
  Is never overturned.

ERASTUS WREN'S VIRTUE

ERASTUS WREN was virtuous, in spirit and in letter,
Was very virtuous and good, and daily growing better;
And so immaculate was he, his neighbors, men and maids,
They daily looked to see the wings sprout from his shoulder-blades.

He wouldn't eat rice; he wouldn't drink tea no more than he'd drink rum,
For they were grown by heathen hands in darkest heathendom;
He'd have no fellowship, he said, with men who thus behaved,
Nor boom the industries of men so totally depraved.

So he lived devoid of coffee and of cocoanuts and spice,
And when his folks had lemon-pie he never touched a slice;
And he'd never taste of pudding, nay! unless, beyond a doubt,

The cook deposed and guaranteed all nutmeg was
left out.

He wouldn't wear cotton shirts at all, because he
was afraid

The girls who work in cotton mills are sometimes
underpaid;
And once he thought he'd wear no wool, it gave
him such a shock
When he was told that one black sheep was found
in every flock.

And he never read the papers, and he never would
begin,
He said they reeked with wickedness, iniquity, and
sin;
He wouldn't consult the dictionary, nor turn a leaf,
not he,
Because he said it held bad words no good man
ought to see.

There was no food for him to eat, no clothes for
him to wear,
No mental sustenance at all to suit him anywhere;
And so he died, — the thing to do to round out his
perfection, —
And not a living man arose to make the least
objection.

Let loftier poets sing of knights,
Of fairies, sylphs, and satyrs,
Of sprites and fays of ancient days,
And other outworn matters,
Of kings and ancient heroes brave —
I sing a newer-comer,
A man whom fate created late,
Her masterpiece, — the drummer.

He never fears the face of man,
Meets all men on a level;
Nor snub nor bruise can make him lose
His perpendicular bevel.
Brave as those mythic crews who sought
The Hesperidian apples;
For, unafraid, with lords of trade
And merchant kings he grapples.

He fights with monarchs of the mart,
He meets them in their fastness,
Shows them his sleek expanse of "cheek,"
And awes them with its vastness.

The merchant king behind his bales
  Yields to the bold marauder;
He cowers and quakes — the drummer takes
  His thousand-dollar order.

He flies upon the wings of steam,
  Nor times nor tides restrict him;
And from his flights he only lights
  To swoop upon his victim.
He swoops — then comes the tug of tongues,
  Of vibrant voices wrangling;
Loud blows are dealt — then in his belt
  Another scalp is dangling.

A thousand miles is but a step,
  The continent a straddle,
When on his steed of wondrous speed
  He buckles on the saddle.
The sunrise and the sunset sea
  To him are near together;
With tropic glow and polar snow
  He sandwiches his weather.

The longitudes and latitudes
  He leaps in tireless motion,
This shuttlecock between New York
  And the Pacific Ocean.

This continent waltzer still will dance
Through states and nations spinning,
And change his climes as many times
As most men change their linen.

"The soul that hustles not shall die,"
This is the creed he preaches;
And 'twill agree with you and me
To heed the truth he teaches.
Life is no languid holiday,
No long and idle summer;
Come, pack your grip, get up and skip,
And hustle, like a drummer!

THE IDEAL HUSBAND TO HIS WIFE

WE'VE lived for forty years, dear wife,
And walked together side by side,
And you to-day are just as dear

As when you were my bride.
I've tried to make life glad for you,
One long, sweet honeymoon of joy,
A dream of marital content,
Without the least alloy.
I've smoothed all boulders from our path,
That we in peace might toil along;
By always hastening to admit
That I was right and you were wrong.

No mad diversity of creed
  Has ever sundered me from thee;
For I permit you evermore
  To borrow your ideas of me.
And thus it is, through weal or woe,
  Our love for evermore endures;
For I permit that you should take
  My views and creeds, and make them yours.
And thus I let you have my way,
  And thus in peace we toil along
For I am willing to admit
  That I am right and you are wrong.

And when our matrimonial skiff
  Strikes snags in love's meandering stream,
I lift our shallop from the rocks,
  And float as in a placid dream.
And well I know our marriage bliss
  While life shall last will never cease;
For I shall always let thee do,
  In generous love, just what I please.
Peace comes, and discord flies away,
  Love's bright day follows hatred's night;
For I am ready to admit
  That you are wrong and I am right.

Dear wife, when discord reared its head,
  And love's sweet light forgot to shine,

'Twas then I freely would permit
That thy will should'st conform to mine.
In all things, whether great or small,
In all life's path we've wandered through,
I've graciously let you perform
Just what I wanted you to do.
No altercation could destroy
The love that held us sure and strong;
For evermore would I admit
That I was right and you were wrong.

Sweet wedded love! O life of bliss!
Our years in peace have flown along;
For you admit that I was right,
And I admit that you were wrong.
No dogged stubbornness of soul
Has ever wrenched my heart from thine;
For thy will ever was my own
Because thy will was always mine.
So sweet forgiveness crowns our years,
And sheds on us its tender light;
For I admit that you were wrong,
And you admit that I was right.

THE SILENCE OF JED DURKEE

THERE is some men is cataract men, their talk forever flows;
They are real Niag'ry spouters — an' I hain't no use for those.
They talk as fast as fellers work w'en workin' by the job;
Their speech, w'en shelled, is one part corn an' ninety-nine parts cob.

Jed Durkee was a diff'runt sort; I tol' my wife his tongue
Had slipped the trolley-wire off that hitched it to his lung.
He kinder had to fish for words, an' bob his bait a sight,
An' sometimes bob a half a day afore he'd get a bite.

He'd cock his eye an' lissen, but he'd never move his lip,
An' let the other fellers spout, but never raise a yip;
An' if the sillickman himself should stop an' talk to Jed,

'Twas ten to one if Jed would smile or open up his head.

But Jed he had a little gal, an' she alone could creep
Up to the sluiceway of his heart an' open up his deep;

An' then the stored-up elerkunce of forty years of strife
Flowed through the thirsty medders of his dusty, dried-up life.

W'y, w'en he talked about that gal, his piled words came in waves,
Demosthernes an' Sissero flopped over in their graves;
The great sea of his speech bust loose, bust loose before he knowed, —

'Twas high tide in his natur', an' his ocean overflowed.

To hear him talk about that gal beat all the flowery pomes
Of John Shakespeare, William Milton, or Wendull Phillups Holmes.
Like showers on a sultry day, he made the earth rejoice;
For there was lightnin' in his eye an' thunder in his voice!

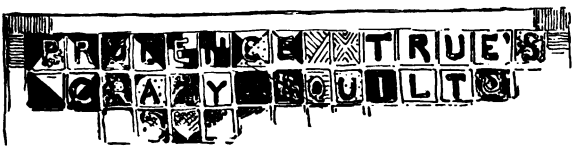
She put new ginger in his blood an' new wine in his brain;
She put new yeast into his soul an' made it rise again;
She made him a new heaven an' earth, a new heart an' new head,
An' out of miser'ble job-stock a bran' new man of Jed.

In a foreign lan' of silence he had allus strayed apart;
But she played upon the long strings of the fiddle of his heart,
Touched 'em with her baby fingers, an' she played upon 'em long —
An' he left the Lan' of Silence for the Music Lan' of Song!

There's music in the dumbest man that can be made to start
If the proper kin' of fiddler on'y fiddles with his heart;
Music sweet of fifes and bugles, cornets, violins, an' drums,
W'en to the thousan'-stringed ol' harp the right musician comes.

Little Nancy was the right one, an' she woke him from the dead,
An' she drew out splendid music from the cracked ol' harp of Jed.
W'en little Nancy went away beyon' these scenes of strife,
Then all the music died away from ol' Jed Durkee's life.

Back into the Lan' of Silence did he travel fur away,
An' the fiddle-strings were silent, for there warn't no han' to play —
Back into his dead, dumb exile, back into his Silent Lan' —
An' he's waitin' there the beck'nin' of his little Nancy's han'.



In seventeen hundred seventy-two
Did the good matron, Prudence True,
A saintly soul devoid of guilt,
Begin her famous crazy quilt,
And told her helpmeet, Goodman True,
She'd finish in a month or two;
And Goodman True, as good men do,
Believed his good wife, Prudence True.

And when he found his supper late,
Brave Goodman True in silence sate,
And waited till his good wife built
Another square of crazy quilt.
He did not rave or loudly speak, —
Much married life had made him meek, —
For he had learned from his sweet bride
A husband's part is to subside,
To sit serene, composed, and dumb,
And in domestic peace succumb.
He on the martyr plan was built,
And lived a martyr to that quilt.

Good Prudence True, as good dames do,
Each day her loved task would pursue;
Each evening her brave husband tried
To look content and edified,
And those slow, patient hours beguile
With his sad, long-enduring smile.
Long years did that poor, sad soul wilt,
Then die at last — of crazy quilt.

Long years passed on, and Widow True
Toiled on, as all good widows do,
And in her calm seclusion curled
Heard not the noises of the world.
The echoes of the Concord fight,
The battle fought on Bunker's height,
The cannonade from Yorktown blown,
That scared King George upon his throne,
She heeded as a trivial thing;
For what are conqueror or king
To a good dame whose life is built
Into her darling crazy quilt?

She never thought if she preferred
George Washington to George the Third;
Her quilt was life's supremest thing,
Both under president and king;
While loyal to her quilt and true,
She thought that either George would do.

Gray, full of years, the good soul died,
And passed on to the Glorified,
And left this scene of woe and guilt
And her unfinished crazy quilt.

And then her youngest daughter, Ruth,
In all the hopefulness of youth,
That knows no obstacle or fears,
Took up the mighty task of years.
Her smile was sweet, her eyes were bright,
Her touch was fairy-like and light;
And lovers read within her eyes
The tale of happy destinies.
And many came and knelt and sued;
But on the quilt her eyes were glued.
She saw them not as there they knelt,
Love's hurtling dart she never felt,
But gave them all to understand
She had a mission great and grand,
A noble and exalted aim
Beyond preposterous Cupid's claim;
A great ambition, grand and high,
To finish up that quilt and die.

And brave Ruth kept her purpose good
Through fourscore years of maidenhood;
And so she lived and died a maid,
And when she in the grave was laid,

Her sister's youngest daughter, Sue,
Took her unfinished quilt to do.

Meantime old empires passed away,
Old kingdoms fell in slow decay,
And senile monarchs, weary grown,
Slipped down from many a tottering throne;
Old realms were conquered by their foes,
Old kingdoms fell, new nations rose;
And long engendered wars that rent
The bases of a continent
Swept on their path of fire and death,
And shrivelled with their fatal breath
The slow-built fabric of the years,
And left a track of blood and tears.
But while the whirling world did range
Adown "the ringing grooves of change,"
While Time's resistless current flowed,
Young Sue she sewed and sewed and sewed
And sewed and sewed, and slowly built
The squares upon that crazy quilt.

And now she's old and bent and gray,
Her youthful friends have passed away,
Her loving husband's tomb is built—
But still she works upon her quilt.
And now, deserted and forlorn,
To generations yet unborn,

When she has left this world of guilt,
She'll pass along her crazy quilt.

In six short days the world was done,
The world, the planets, and the sun;
But in a hundred years are built
A fraction of a crazy quilt.

THE DEACON'S BEAR-YARN

WHEN the Deacon told his bear-yarn we would
gather round to hear him,
In open-mouthed expectancy to drink in all he said;
For all list'ners who drew near him could not
choose but to revere him,
For an aureole of honor rested on the Deacon's
head.
'Twas a tale of gore and slaughter, where the red
blood flowed like water,
Such as ear had never heard of, or the heart could
not conceive;
But our faith did never weaken in that bear-yarn of
the Deacon —
When the Deacon told his bear-yarn we would
listen and believe.

We had listened to the horse-liar and the fish-liar
and the snake-liar,
But they told no tale of wonder with the Deacon's
to compare;
Though their tales were dark and dire, not a tale of
not a liar

Approached the truthful story of the Deacon and
the bear.
'Twas a tale of awful terror, but without a shade of
error;
And whereas it was impossible the Deacon could
deceive,

We knew the Deacon's bear-yarn was an honest,
fair, and square yarn —
When the Deacon told his bear-yarn we would
listen and believe.

When the Deacon told his bear-yarn we could hear
the bones a-breaking,

And the loud reverberations of the bear's resounding growl;
We could feel the mountains shaking, and the very planet quaking,
And the air a-palpitating with the thunder of his howl.
Oh, the sanguinary, savage fierceness of the awful ravage
Of the roaring, ravening monster, heart of man cannot conceive!
But, whereas we knew the Deacon from the truth could never weaken —
When the Deacon told his bear-yarn we would listen and believe.

When the fierce bear wound his red jaws round the white neck of the Deacon,
And we heard the Deacon gurgle with a death-gasp of despair,
How our trembling knees would weaken as we gazed upon the Deacon,
And our lifted hats go flying from our perpendicular hair!
When into the mad bear's vitals — strangest of all strange recitals —
Did the Deacon plunge his right arm, with its reeking, bloody sleeve,

And tear out the bear's heart beating, as you'd
tear a piece of sheeting —
When the Deacon told this bear-yarn we would
listen and believe.

Fiercer, wilder, grew the contest every time we did
behold it,
Wilder, fiercer, fought the Deacon, fiercer, wilder,
raged the bear;
It was bloodier, more terrific, every time the Deacon
told it,
Till at length there was no story with this bear-yarn
could compare.
Bear and Deacon mixed and mangled, gore in-
crusted, blood bespangled,
Dance through sanguinary waltzes that the mind
cannot conceive;
But there is a deathless beauty in all truth, and 'tis
our duty
When the Deacon tells his bear-yarn just to listen
and believe.

GIDEON GASKINS'S DEATHS

OLD Gideon Gaskins used to die
With unexampled frequency;
Indeed, the joys of death to him
Possessed unusual piquancy.
An upright, downright man was he,
Of rule and regulation;
And, barring his repeated deaths,
He had no dissipation.
He lived a life of ordered peace,
Of sweetness, truth, and charity;
But through his long and honored life
He died with regularity.

And every time that Gideon died
He wished the sad reality
To be observed and recognized
With decent-like formality;
And so his heirs about his bed
Were ranged in due position,
To hear at each repeated death
His dying admonition.

They shed a proper flood of tears,
  Their sobs were uncontrollable,
And every time that Gideon died
  Their grief was inconsolable.

And every time that Gideon died
  He gave an exhortation,
To which he'd given life-long thought
  And years of preparation;
A speech that sagged with good advice
  Which he had learned memoriter,
Which made a fame for Gideon
  As a great dying orator.
And when he'd made this dying speech
  To friend and heir and lover,
The dying Gideon would begin
  To speedily recover.

And then the iron grasp of death
  That's usually so rigorous,
Would quietly let go its grip
  And leave him strong and vigorous.
But then within a month or two
  The summons would go flying
To all of Gideon's heirs to come,
  For he once more was dying;
And when the weeping heirs once more
  About his bed were seated,

Then would his time-worn dying speech
Be once again repeated.

And so he died year after year,
Till all his heirs were buried,
Till they in Charon's fatal boat
Had o'er the stream been ferried.
For all his heirs they died one death,
And lived a life of brevity;
But he who died so frequently
Attained a great longevity.
Ye who would taste a long, sweet life
In all its lengthy piquancy,
When you are young begin to die,
And keep it up with frequency.

BEN BURLAP'S BARN

BEN BURLAP bragged about his barn with every man he see;
He said it wuz the finest barn that any barn could be.
Sez he, "The worl' is full er barns; but still I calkerlate
There ain't no barn like Burlap's barn, an' hain't been up to date."

An' w'en yer saw a wild-eyed man who raised consid'ble rumpus,
An' waved an' flapped his arms aroun' to all p'ints of the compass,
An' swished his whiskers in the wind, an' spun a half-day yarn,
You'd know it wuz Ben Burlap, sure, expoundin' on his barn.

An' I went down to see his barn; he hung on so
like sin,
One day I tol' my wife I guessed I'd go an'
take it in.
'Twuz jest ez good ez Jim hed said, ez fine ez
it could be;
It beat all barns I ever see, or ever 'spect to see.

W'en I come out, sez I to Jim, "What's that
small buildin' there,
That kinder wobbly lookin' thing, that tumble-
down affair?
It looks so ricketty an' weak, 'tain't fit to hol' a
mouse."
"Oh, yes," sez Jim, "it's full er mice; that ar hut
is my house."

DESERTED FARMS

YES, the farms is all deserted; there is no one
here to see
But jest a few ol' women an' a few ol' men like
me;
But we still cling, like ol' gray moss, a little tot-
terin' band —
We cling like ol' gray moss aroun' the ruins of
the land.

Ol' Christopher Columbus, in fourteen ninety-
two,
He lifted up a bright green worl' from out the
ocean blue;
But all thet New Worl' hereabouts — an' Pokum-
ville ain't small, —
Our young men hez diskivered ain't worth livin'
in at all.

There ain't no room atween the rocks to dig a
livin' out;
Our soil is much too thin and poor to make a
fortune sprout;

Our scrub-oaks bear no greenback leaves, an' in
our tater-hills
We have to dig too long an' hard to scratch out
dollar bills.

An' so our boys hez travelled off to where the
millions go
To dig a golden harvesting without a spade or
hoe;
An' down the railroad, through the gulch, be'end
their father's sight,
They went an' left us ol' men to the shadders of
the night.

But some hez foun' the rocks an' weeds still
choke a barren land,
An' life is not all intervale, but some is dusty
sand;
An' he who digs a harvest in the country or the
town
Must hoe among the stubborn rocks an' keep the
thistles down.

But 'tis better for the young man an' the ol' man
side by side
To drive life's team together, an' so down the
journey ride;

An' w'en the ol' man, tires out an' falls asleep
some day,
The young man, he can take the reins an' ride
upon his way.

But our farms is all deserted; there is no one
here to see
But jest a few ol' women an' a few ol' men like
me;
But we still cling, like ol' gray moss, a little
totterin' band —
We cling like ol' gray moss aroun' the ruins of
the land.

I'm a Presbyterian deacon, and I wish to plainly
state
That every kind of circus is entirely reprobate;
They all are instrumental in advancing Satan's
plan,
An evidence of the innate depravity of man.

A vanity of vanities, and there is nothing worse,
A vile abomination and a pestilential curse;
And I make it thus emphatic, for I wish all men
to know
To every kind of circus I'm an unrelenting foe.

And down to Grassville yesterday, where I went
down to trade,

The wicked circus came to town, and had a big
parade;
And I beheld there watching it, in most ungodly joy,
In graceless, unregenerate glee, a woman and her
boy.

And I thought it was my duty, as a deacon in
the land,
To give that wicked woman my professional rep-
rimand.
I tried to do it piously, and said my little say,
Mixed with Scriptural quotations in an edifying way.

And then she said, "Why, me and Jim have
walked ten miles to-day
To see the big procession; do you think it's wrong
to stay?
And every day now for three months my Jim and
I have made
The tired time pass quicker when we've talked
of this parade.

"Jim is a small boy, mister, and boys are fond of
fun;
But there's nothing for a widow's boy but work
from sun to sun.
And, like a little hero, he has worked in sun
and shade,

And the only thought to cheer him was the
dream of this parade.

"And we've walked ten miles to see it, and
must now walk home again;
But for a year will this parade go marching
through Jim's brain,
And when his young limbs ache with toil, and
his young heart is sore,
He will hear its blare and music, and will then
be strong once more.

"Come, Jim," she said; "the big parade has now
passed out of sight,
And we must start upon our trip to get back
home to-night."
"Just wait a bit," says I to her, "just wait a
bit, don't go;
For here's two dollar bills for you, — go in and
see the show."

I'm a Presbyterian deacon, and I wish to plainly
state
That every kind of circus is entirely reprobate;
But when I gave that money, I've a faith that
will abide
That the Recording Angel placed it on my credit
side.

JED JOHNSON'S ADVICE

W'EN ol' Ben Badger's pug-nosed Pete
  Declared he'd wallop me,
I jest took up my laigs an' run,
  Ez scat ez I could be;
But ol' Jed Johnson said to me,
  "Don't be a baby, Jim;
You'll fin' he's jest ez scat of you
  Ez you are scat of him."

Bimeby w'en I fust fell in love
  My brain wuz in a whirl;
But ol' Jed Johnson said to me,
  "Young man, go tell the girl.
Yes, you are scat to death, 'tis true;
  But let me tell ye, sir,
You'll fin' her jest ez scat of you
  Ez you are scat of her."

An' w'en I run for sillickman
  Agin ol' Hiram Brown,
He run so well I felt thet I
  Mus' haul my colors down;

But then Jed Johnson said to me,
"Hi Brown's a good un, Jim;
But then he's jest ez scat of you
Ez you are scat of him."

An' so I licked Ben Badger's Pete,
An' won ol' Podgkin's Sal;
An' she's ez scrumptious ez a wife
Ez she was ez a gal.
I whipped ol' Brown for sillickman
So quick his head did swim;
I foun' he wuz ez scat of me
Ez I wuz scat of him.

An' so I say, wade in, young man,
An' though yer nerve is weak,
An' though yer tremble like a leaf,
An' feel yer lack of cheek,
Go wade right in among the crowd,
An' every current stem;
You'll fin' they're jest ez scat of you
Ez you are scat of them.

DURKEE'S MILL

THE world, they say, is heaped with wealth,
  Its vaults are stored with treasure,
Enough to purchase bread for all,
  And fill the world with pleasure,
And food enough is in the land
  All hungry mouths to fill;
But all we eat and wear must come
  Through Durkee's cotton-mill.
And great fear settled on the town
When Durkee's cotton-mill shut down.

There is a world that's filled with joy,
  And strewn with blooming flowers;
But, outside Durkee's cotton-mill
  No world for us and ours.
When the great wheel of Durkee's mill
  Paused and no longer whirled,
It seemed the great God with his hand
  Had stopped the rolling world;
For all the world we hope to fill
Is bound in Durkee's cotton-mill.

From dawn to dusk in Durkee's mill
We toil and never shirk;
No time to think, no time to feel,
And only time to work.
And many a web of cotton cloth
That mill has woven, no doubt;
And many a man's and woman's life
That mill has ravelled out.
But still a great fear smote the town
When Durkee's cotton-mill shut down.

There's bitter thoughts for Durkee's mill,
Now little Bob is dead;
For had I work in Durkee's mill
I might have bought him bread.
"When I go up to heaven," he said,
"And find God there, you know,
I will be bold, and ask him then,
Because I love you so, —
I'll ask the great God, so I will,
To start the work in Durkee's mill."

THE WORK-SEEKER

You think I'd better go to work? Wall, that's
my own idee;
I'll do it w'en I find the work that's suitable for me.
Won't give me bread because ye think I'm strong
enough to work?
Wall, w'en I find my kind of toil I'll labor like a
Turk.

"Keep strugglin' on," our pastor said, "keep
strugglin' in life's race,
For ev'ry man who toils an' tries will allus find
his place;
For Natur' never made a man but at the same
time, too,
She made some fittin,' special work for that same
man to do."

An' so I started out in life resolved to never shirk,
To hunt the wide worl' up an' down to find my
special work.
I started out to find my work, all ready to begin it;
But all the work I ever foun' had too much labor
in it.

At first I worked on father's farm; but soon I come to see
That never was the kind er work that Natur' meant for me.

She surely never meant this kind for sich as me to do;
For work was far too numerous, an' rest was far too few.

An' next I went into the store of Deacon Isr'el Brown,

For oppertunities 'twould give fer rest an' settin' down;
But customers kep' droppin' in to wake me from my doze,
An' broke in on my sleep so much I couldn't have no repose.

An' then I lef' the Deacon's store, an' run away to sea,
"I'm boun' to find the work," says I, "that Natur' meant for me."
I kinder liked to sail aroun' beneath them foreign skies;
But still I foun' the work was mixed with too much exercise.

Sence then I've tramped about the earth to try if I could see
Some kind of unlaborious work that Natur' meant for me;
And so to help a brave young man to boldly push ahead,
I frankly ask ye for a loan of jest a piece of bread.

That's right; I knew you'd fetch it out soon as my tale was tol.'

You are a woman glad to aid a strong, ambitious soul.
Now you might fetch, to quench my thirst, — I find I'm feelin' dry, —
A glass er milk, some jelly cake, an' sev'rul kinds of pie.

JACK DAWSON'S PILGRIMAGE

JACK DAWSON lived way down in Maine,
Hoed corn, raised chickens, and reaped grain;
But said that Maine was not designed
For men of mastery and mind;
And said a man of any soul
Shouldn't vegetate in such a hole.
"Vermont's the State," says he, "I want;
And I'll raise butter in Vermont."

At butter, then, Jack took a turn,
But found it too hard work to churn.
"The air here in Vermont," says he,
"Is much too rarefied for me;
No man of enterprise and dash,
Who hankers after fame and cash,
Will browse around this barren peak,
And grind his nose down to a beak;
These hills may soak in snow and sleet, —
I'll go to Kansas and raise wheat."

Jack found the weevils in his wheat
Would neither parley nor retreat;

Then said that Kansas was a place
Unsuited to the human race;
But 'twas a most delightful State
From which to skip and emigrate.
To California he escapes,
And settles down to raising grapes.

When half his yearly crop was lost
By a hard, premature frost,
Jack said, "This country is a failure;
I ship next Monday for Australia."
He found Australia was too new,
Its risks too great, its gains too few.
He said, "No longer I'll stay curled
In this back entry of the world;
And this time I propose to go
To where my gifts will have a show.
There is a city of some size,
Wherein a soul of enterprise
Can heap up piles of gold and gain,
And find a chance to use his brain,
And reach great affluence and renown" —
And so Jack sailed to London town.

Jack landed confident and proud,
But soon was missing in the crowd.
He mingled in the general swim;
And Gladstone never called on him,

And still the Queen she sat alone,
Nor asked him up to share her throne.
He mingled in the million rout,
And fate refused to sift him out.
Jack vanished, but the rolling world
Upon its axis still was whirled;
The symptoms of the universe
Were not much better nor much worse.
And when friend Jack appeared again,
'Twas six months later down in Maine.

And Jack he settled down in Maine,
Hoed corn, raised chickens, and reaped grain;
He'd travelled round the world to find
A place just suited to his mind,
And found it, after years of doubt —
The town from which he started out.
"The way to get on fast," says he,
"Is just to stay right where you be."

THE CALF-PATH

I.

ONE day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home as good calves should;

But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then three hundred years have fled,
And I infer the calf is dead.

II.

But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;

And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,

And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made.

III.

And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent about,

And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path;

But still they followed — do not laugh —
The first migrations of that calf,

And through this winding wood-way stalked
Because he wobbled when he walked.

IV.

This forest path became a lane,
That bent and turned and turned again;

This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And travelled some three miles in one.

And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

V.

The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street;

And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare.

And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;

And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

VI.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed this zigzag calf about

And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.

They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;

For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

VII.

A moral lesson this might teach
Were I ordained and called to preach;

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,

And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,

And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.

They keep the path a sacred groove,
Along which all their lives they move;

But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf.

Ah, many things this tale might teach —
But I am not ordained to preach.

THE FLY-AWAY-BIRD

Oh, the Fly-Away-Bird is swift of wing,
And swift and high is he!

And he flies as high, in the blue of the sky,
As any birds that be.
And fleet of foot is the lusty man,
As fleet as a wingèd word,
Who can sprinkle salt, without default,
On the tail of the Fly-Away-Bird.

But the Fly-Away-Bird seems as tame as a hen,
Like a barnyard fowl seems he;
But the nest he has made, or the egg he has laid,
Is a stubborn absentee.
And when a man, with a sprinkle of salt,
Comes near to his roosting-place,
The bird he darts to the outermost parts
Of the farthest shores of space.

But we all chase after the Fly-Away-Bird,
Over river and mountain and dale,
And think in an hour we'll have the power
To sprinkle the salt on his tail;
But still, since the base of the planet was laid,
And the morning stars were heard,
No fortunate fellow has felt of the mellow
Bright plumes of the Fly-Away-Bird.

For the Fly-Away-Bird is our own bright dream,
'Tis the hope that was born with man;
Then follow it far, to the uttermost star,
To the clear blue's farthest span.
And the man who has no Fly-Away-Bird
Is a mortal most forlorn;
It were better that he should be sunk in the sea,
Or that he had never been born.

See! he lights up there on the Crags of Hope,
  And his wings they gleam in the sun
With the gorgeous dyes of the sunset skies
  When the summer day is done;
And though this bird was never yet caged
  In a narrower cage than the sky,
Whoso is deterred from chasing the bird,
  'Tis time for that man to die.

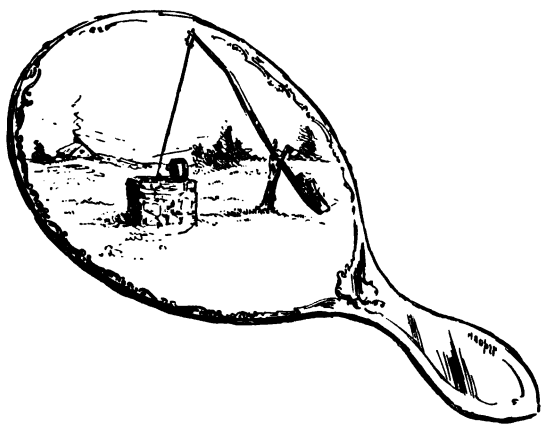
Then up and away for the Fly-Away-Bird!
  Let us lead him a jolly good race;
And let every man know that the bird that flies low
  Is no kind of a bird to chase.
Then up and away for this high-flying fowl!
  Let him pierce to the deeps of the sky;
Let him understand, with the salt in our hand,
  We'll chase till the day that we die.

TRUTH

THERE'S a hand on the rudder that will not flinch,
There's no fear in the Pilot's face
As he guides the worlds, like boats in a storm,
Through the rocking seas of space.
And whether they make the harbor at last,
Beyond the shoals and the swell,
Or sail forever a shoreless sea,
I know that all is well.
And I learn these things from the heart of the wood,
From the solemn soul of the sea;
For never a bird in a wire-bound cage
Told all these things to me.

And the soul of man is a sunward bird,
With wings that are made for flight,
To pierce to the fount of the shining day,
And float through the depths of night.
And I read these things in that Bible of God,
Whose leaves are the spreading sky,
And the legible face of the dark green sea,

With the eye behind the eye.
For truth is not closed in the lids of a book,
For its chainless soul is free;
And never a bird in a wire-bound cage
Told all these things to me.



For truth surges into the open heart,
And into the willing eye,
And streams from the breath of the steaming earth,
And drops from the bending sky;
'Tis not shut in a book, in a church, or a school,
Nor cramped in the chains of a creed,
But lives in the open air and the light
For all men in their need!

But the fish that swims in a goldfish vase,
  Knows not of the salted sea;
And never a bird in a wire-bound cage
  Told all these things to me.

'Tis the Voice that comes from the gilded peaks,
  From the hills that shoulder the sky,
Through the topless heights of a man's own dreams
  This Voice goes wandering by;
And who roams the earth with an open heart,
  With an ear attuned to hear,
Will catch some broken chord of the sound
  Whenever the Voice comes near.
But not past the prison of custom or creed
  Will the Voice or the Vision flee;
And never a bird in a wire-bound cage
  Told all these things to me.

NEW YEAR'S AT HARD FACT MEADOWS

HOPE came to me last New Year, and told her pretty lie,
How she'd make the earth grow greener, how she'd scour up the sky,
How she'd make the stars shine brighter, ere the coming year was done,
Make the grave moon more resplendent, polish up the ancient sun.

And my bird of promise sat there on a very near-by rail,
And he lightened all my back-yard with the plumage of his tail;
And he gazed with Orphic meaning from the corner of his eye,
Which proceeding I translated, "Come and catch me; here am I."

And I sauntered out to catch him as he sat there on the rail,
With the salt of expectation to be sprinkled on his tail;

And I reached my hand to grasp him, with glad
hope upon my face,
When I found that he had vanished to the other
side of space.

This bird of paradise I chased did never once
alight;
And the fish in Hope's great ocean, which I bobbed
for, did not bite;
And Fortune's fairest apples grew beyond my long-
est pole;
And Fate's fattest woodchuck dodged me, and
escaped into his hole.

My freighted ship that sailed from Spain sank
'neath the ocean spray;
And Fortune's eel it wiggled so I let it slip away;
And my dark-breasted grapes of luck that hung in
pendent shapes
Were stolen by another chap who had a taste for
grapes.

On the Go and Get There Railroad, Hope pre-
sented me a pass,
Good for a Pullman palace car, with everything
first-class;
And she checked my baggage for me, and she
said 'twould all be found

At the Get There Central Station where her
through express was bound.

Away the engine bounded, and the bridges creaked
and swayed,
And the Pullman rocked and trembled, but we
swept on undismayed;
And we dashed on through the fog-banks, till a
rotten culvert cracked,
And we rolled down the embankment to the Mead-
ows of Hard Fact.

And since then I've bought a pickaxe, and a
shovel and a hoe,
And I've ditched the Hard Fact Meadows, and
I've made 'em bloom and grow;
Though I've raised no golden harvest, I have
made my farming pay;
And I've raised fair grass upon them, and it
makes nutritious hay.

But still the ancient rumors float into my meadow
here,
That Hope makes prodigious promise for the com-
ing glad New Year;
That she offers still free passage on the Go and
Get There train —
But I've got my Hard Fact hay-crop to get in
before the rain.

So the fish in Hope's great ocean I no more invite
to bite,
Nor the soaring bird of paradise I beckon to alight;
I let Fortune's fairest apples go untroubled by my
pole,
And Fate's fattest woodchuck amble his own gait
into his hole.

But I've found the Hard Fact Meadows, now I've
drained them, sweet and fair,
And I smell the scent of daisies and of clover in
the air;
And though no untoiled-for manna from the gener-
ous heaven drops —
Bring my hoe and spade and sickle, I will gather
in my crops.

THE FATE OF PIOUS DAN

"RUN down and get the doctor, quick!"
Cried Jack Bean with a whoop.
"Run, Dan; for mercy's sake be quick!
Our baby's got the croup."
But Daniel shook his solemn head,
His sanctimonious brow,
And said, "I cannot go, for I
Must read my Bible now;
For I have regular hours to read
The Scripture for my spirit's need."

Said Silas Gove to Pious Dan,
"Our neighbor, 'Rastus Wright,
Is very sick; will you come down
And watch with him to-night?"
"He has my sympathy," says Dan,
"And I would sure be there,
Did I not feel an inward call
To spend the night in prayer.
Some other man with Wright must stay;
Excuse me while I go and pray."

"Old Briggs has fallen in the pond!"
Cried little Bijah Brown;
"Run, Pious Dan, and help him out,
Or else he sure will drown!"
"I trust he'll swim ashore," said Dan,
"But now my soul is awed,

And I must meditate upon
The goodness of the Lord;
And nothing merely temporal ought
To interrupt my holy thought."

So Daniel lived a pious life,
As Daniel understood,
But all his neighbors thought he was
Too pious to be good;

And Daniel died, and then his soul,
On wings of hope elate,
In glad expectancy flew up
To Peter's golden gate.
"Now let your gate wide open fly;
Come, hasten, Peter! Here am I."

"I'm sorry, Pious Dan," said he,
"That time will not allow;
But you must wait a space, for I
Must read my Bible now."
So Daniel waited long and long,
And Peter read all day.
"Now, Peter, let me in," he cried.
Said Peter, "I must pray;
And no mean temporal affairs
Must ever interrupt my prayers."

Then Satan, who was passing by,
Saw Dan's poor shivering form,
And said, "My man, it's cold out here,
Come down where it is warm."
The angel baby of Jack Bean,
The angel 'Rastus Wright,
And old Briggs, a white angel too,
All chuckled with delight;
And Satan said, "Come, Pious Dan,
For you are just my style of man."

A MISLAID CONTINENT

Now let us run the list over,
Of men preceding Christopher,
Who came before Columbus came, that laggard dull and slow;
The early Buddhist missionaries,
Those rapt religious visionaries,
Who thirteen hundred years ago discovered Mexico.

An Irishman named Brendin
(The list is never ending)
He crossed the Sea of Darkness, crossed the wild, untravelled main.
He thought that he would try a land
Some miles away from Ireland;
So he, twelve hundred years ago, discovered us again.

Leif Ericson, the Norseman,
A regular old sea-horseman,
Who rode the waves like stallions, and couldn't endure the shore,

Five hundred years thereafter
Said to his wife in laughter,
"It's time to go and find, my dear, America once more."

And so he went and found it,
With the ocean all around it,
And just where Brendin left it five hundred years before;
And then he cried, "Eureka!
I'm a most successful seeker!"
And then — went off and lost it, could not find it any more.

They fought the sea, and crossed it,
And found a world — and lost it;
Those pre-Columbian voyagers were absent-minded men.
Their minds were so preoccupied,
That when a continent they espied,
They absently mislaid it, and it couldn't be found again.

But Columbus when he found us
Somehow kept his arm around us,
For he knew he must be careful when he found a hemisphere;

And he knew just how to use it,
And he didn't misplace and lose it,
And mislay it in a corner where it couldn't be found next year.

Like a pretty worthless locket
He didn't put it in his pocket,
And drop the New World through a hole that he'd forgot to mend;
But he kept his eye upon it,
And he kept his finger on it,
And he kept his grip upon it, and held on it to the end.

FATE'S FRUSTRATED JOKE

ONCE Fate with an ironic zest
Made man — a most delicious jest.
"From out the void I man evoke,"
Said Fate, "my best and latest joke!
I stand him on two slender props,
Two pins on which the creature hops.
I'll watch the unbalanced gawky sprawl,
Prong after prong behold him crawl;
And when a strong wind from the east
Blows on this perpendicular beast,
I'll laugh to see him topple o'er,
And all the gazing gods shall roar!

"This mite shall feed the lion's maw,
And dangle on the tiger's paw,
Shall be the sportive panther's prey,
And flee from dragons night and day.
This featherless bird of awkward mould
Shall chatter through the winter's cold;
No hair or wool to him I give,
No turtle shell in which to live;
Nor can he, like the bear," said Fate,

"Dig holes in which to hibernate.
Out in the universe I fling
This naked, helpless, shivering thing.
Of all my jokes this is the best,
This is my masterpiece of jest!"

But Fate in mixing man his brains
Forgot to take the usual pains,
Dropped in, and made a fearful muss,
An extra scoop of phosphorus;
Then man, he slyly said, "You wait,
And I will get the joke on Fate!"

He did not feed the lion's maw,
Or dangle on the tiger's paw,
But cut the lion into steak,
And used his skin a coat to make.
The whirlwind from the east might blow,
But still it could not overthrow
This featherless biped; for 'tis plain
This extra phosphorus in his brain
Was just enough upon each limb
To hold him up and balance him.
And so through all the years that come
He keeps his equilibrium.

And so this pronged and toppling thing
Stood straight, and made himself a king;

This straddling biped did not fail
To rule the elephant and whale,
For even great Leviathan
Accepts the sovereign sway of man.
And sheltered safe from wounds and scars
His thoughts went out beyond the stars,
And travelled through Time's shoreless sea,
And "wandered through eternity."
And baffled Fate said, "Well, I see
This fellow's got the joke on me!"

But let not pride soar forth too high,
And gloat on our immensity,
But think sometimes of what a flout
And failure we had been without
That slip of Fate in making us,
That extra scoop of phosphorus!

WHEN WE WORKED OUR TAX OUT.

Oh, our life was tough and tearful, and its toil was often fearful,
And often we grew faint beneath the load;
But there came a glad vacation, and a sweet alleviation,
When we used to work our tax out on the road.
When we used to work our tax out, then we felt the joys of leisure,
And we felt no more the prick of labor's goad;
Then we shared the golden treasure of sweet rest in fullest measure —
When we used to work our tax out on the road.

There are sapient seers and sages who predict, in coming ages,
Life's tragedy of labor will be o'er,
And a glad, full-fledged millennium will leap on the proscenium,
And we'll play, but never labor any more.
But we look not in the future for that happy, halcyon hour
When we'll throw off every burden, every load;

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For our Eden burst in flower, and we dozed in leisure's bower,
When we used to work our tax out on the road.

When we used to work our tax out (if I let the bottom facts out),
We had somnolent contentment and repose;
With no toil or work to cumber us, our rest was sweet and slumberous,
And in deep, delicious dreaming did we doze.
The drowsiness of languid rest o'er every man was creeping,
And in a calm, serene content we all threw down our load;
Careless of life's wail and weeping, every blessed man was sleeping,
When we used to work our tax out on the road.

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THE MILKMAN'S TEAM

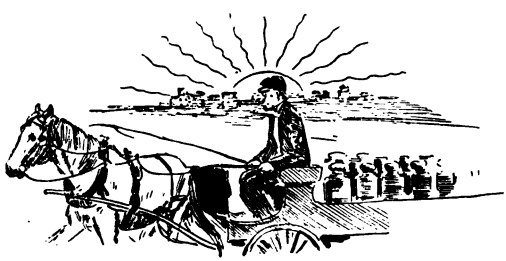
A YEAR, an age, a century, seem crowded in one night,
When a poor fellow cannot sleep, but simply longs for light;
I travel through a brookless land, along a blackened way,
A weary waste, without a flower, between the day and day.

Along about the Fall of Troy the clock strikes one, and then
It waits till Cæsar conquers Gaul before it strikes again;
When William masters England, then the slow old clock strikes three;
At four o'clock Columbus' ships have crossed the "ocean sea."

And so the centuries drip on. I toss with weary heart,
With every hour of the night five hundred years apart;

Becalmed upon a stagnant pool, upon a waveless
stream —
Until I hear the rattle of our good old milk-
man's team.

The rattle of that milkman's team is like the
bugle's cheer,



That tells beleagured cities that a friendly host
is near.
The Ethiopian darkness has as yet no brighten-
ing beam —
But I know the morn is coming when I hear that
milkman's team.

He sits upon his milk-team, half awake and half
adrowse,
Lamenting the low price of milk, the lofty price
of cows;

He knows not with what dignity he sweeps along
the way, —
The herald of a sunrise hope, the harbinger of
day.

And I've learned to listen for him, through the
darkest night's despair,
For the glad auroral music of the hoof-beats of
his mare.
Then the black-haired night grows shamefaced,
and he turns his gaze away
From the hopeful, smiling features of the rosy
Babe of Day.

There are sages, wise, I doubt not, who believe
the world's sad plight
Is to wander, ever deeper, into blacker glooms
of night;
Through the starless midnight shadows they can
see no sunrise-gleam —
But I listen for the rattle of the morning milk-
man's team.

Dark, sometimes, ah, dark and heavy, is the tired
world's despair,
But the glad, auroral music of the hoof-beats of
his mare

Any hour may smite the darkness — then we'll
see the heavens astream
With the sunrise light of morning, when we hear
the milkman's team.

Hark! hear ye not the rat-tat of his good mare
through the night?
She is bringing morning with her, she is coming
with the light;
And the shamefaced night of terror he shall turn
his gaze away
From the hopeful, smiling features of the rosy
Babe of Day.

THE OX-TEAM

I SIT upon my ox-team, calm,
  Beneath the lazy sky,
And crawl contented through the land,
  And let the world go by.
The thoughtful ox has learned to wait,
  And nervous impulse smother,
And ponder long before he puts
  One foot before the other.

And men with spanking teams pass by,
  And dash upon their way,
As if it were their hope to find
  The world's end in a day;
And men dash by in palace cars,
  On me dark frowns they cast,
As the lightning-driven Present frowns
  Upon the slow old Past.

What do they chase, these men of steam,
  Their smoke-flags wide unfurled,
Pulled by the roaring fire-fiend,
  That shakes the reeling world?

What do ye seek, ye men of steam,
So wild and mad you press?
Is this, is this the railroad line
That leads to happiness?

And when you've swept across the day,
And dashed across the night,
Is there some station through the hills
Where men can find delight?
Ah, toward the Depot of Content,
Where no red signals stream,
I go by ox-team just as quick
As you can go by steam.

THE PRISONER

A MAN'S skull is his lifelong jail;
  Behind its prison bars,
From its eye-windows, doth the soul
  Peep at the earth and stars;
But unlike jails of wood or stone,
Its prisoner ever dwells alone.

Though through its front doors perfumed gales
  Are blown from glens of gladness,
And through its back doors music strains
  Roll in in waves of madness,
And though he hear and heed each tone,
The prisoner still must dwell alone.

Though past the windows of the jail
  Sweep scenes of solemn splendor,
And through the doors float hymns of joy,
  Or dirges deep and tender,
The prisoner hears the mirth and moan,
But in his jail he dwells alone.

No lover ever knows the soul
  He loves in all its sweetness;

The fullest love, however strong,
Is marred by incompleteness;
No heart is ever fully known,
The prisoner ever dwells alone.

THE HILL ABOVE THE TOWN

UPON a high hill, looking down
Upon the towers of a town,
A barefoot boy stood strong and fair,
The breezes playing with his hair,
And gazed upon the burnished spires,
All glorified by sunset fires,
And for the first time saw the gleams
Of this great city of his dreams.

For many days, 'neath sun and star,
The sturdy lad had journeyed far.
In winding ways, in meadows sweet,
Where dripping dews baptized his feet
O'er hillsides, where the sterile sod
Bloomed Eden-like with goldenrod,
And where the gladdening river flows —
A poem on a page of prose —
Through bowldered hills and uplands bare,
Where silence reigns in earth and air.

To tired mortals standing near
The city's roar is harsh to hear;

But when it lifts and sweeps away,
And settles, like a music spray,
It grows to anthems in the air,
And falls in magic everywhere.
The young boy hears it far away,
Within his native fields at play;
And the strange magic of the strain
  Falls like a madness on his heart,
Burns like a fever in his brain, —
  He says, "I must depart."
He hears it in the western wind,
A weird, strange music, undefined;
And in the sheltered meadow nooks
It mingles with the song of brooks,
The low of herds, the hum of bees,
The rustling of the maple-trees.

O'er woodland paths and sheltered dells
That omnipresent music swells;
Then surges up within his breast
The tumult of his first unrest.
He hears it, and forgets to prize
The sweetness in his mother's eyes;
The sterner but benignant grace
That rests upon his father's face.
He hears that music night and morn,
  And sweeter, stronger, does it grow;
He hears it call him on and on,

He cannot choose but go!
He leaves his boyhood's sheltered nest,
Nor henceforth knows the name of rest.

And so our barefoot boy was there,
Drawn by that music in the air;
And bravely stood he looking down
Upon the towers of the town.

And there were men within that town
Of earth-encompassing renown;
But out beyond the wooded crest
That hemmed his childhood like a nest,
Beyond that clipped horizon's zone,
The barefoot's name had never flown.
And poverty within that town
Kept many a fate-cursed mortal down;
But nowhere in its streets might be
A man or child as poor as he.

But still he stood above the town,
In hopeful prescience gazing down;
A strong audacity of heart
Sustained him, and he feared no foe —
And part was ignorance, and part
A wisdom higher than we know.
And so he dared, with fearless mien,
To stand and front the world, serene.

"There's nothing in that town," said he,
"There's nothing there too great for me."
He bravely smiled, and started down;
The light of hope was in his eye.
"I'll be the mayor of that town,"
Said he, "before I die."

THE HOME IN THE VALLEY

I own my little home up here among the mountains hid;
The sky spreads down about it like a star-strewn coverlid.

No noise that thunders through the world, and racks the souls of men
Can desecrate the silence of my mountain-guarded glen.

But here within the valley, in its deep seclusion curled,
I behold the mighty pageant of the wonders of the world.

Here the brooks from down the mountains through the verdured valleys flee,
Drawn by their eternal madness to be mingled with the sea,

As the soul of man in exile daily struggles in its flight
Toward the far-off central ocean of the shoreless Infinite.

Here tall cities of enchantment, like the cities of the blest,
Sunset capitals of cloudland, rise within the crimson west.

Here the miracle of morning, sunrise-crowned and dew-impearled,
In its old eternal newness daily breaks upon the world.

Here the pomp of all the seasons marches yearly through the glen,
Bringing gifts of snow and flowers, and the fruits of earth to men.

I am bosomed deep in beauty; like the dewdrop in the rose,
Let me fade into the silence of the fragrant night's repose.

Let me live here in the valley, in its deep seclusion curled,
And behold the mighty pageant of the wonders of the world.

Restless are the feet that wander, restless are the hearts that roam;
Here God shows me all his glories: let me stay and rest at home.

Don't hate your neighbor if his creed
With your own doctrine fails to fit;
The chances that you both are wrong,
You know, are well-nigh infinite.
Don't fancy, mid a million worlds
That fill the silent dome of night,
The gleams of all pure truth converge
Within the focus of your sight;
For this, my friend, is not the work for you:
So leave all this for smaller men to do.

Don't hate men when their hands are hard,
And patches make their garments whole;
A man whose clothes are spick and span
May wear big patches on his soul.
Don't hate a man because his coat
Does not conform to fashion's art;
A man may wear a full-dress suit,
And have a ragamuffin heart.
This, my good friend, is not the work for you;
So leave all this for smaller men to do.

Hate not the men of narrow scope,
Of senses dull, whose brows recede,
Whose hearts are embryos; for you spring,
My dainty friend, from just this breed.
Be sure the years will lift them up;
They'll toil beneath the patient sky,
And through the vista of long days
Will all come forward by and by.
Hate not these men; this is no work for you:
So leave all this for smaller men to do.

Despise not any man that lives,
Alien or neighbor, near or far;
Go out beneath the scornful stars,
And see how very small you are.
The world is large, and space is high
That sweeps around our little ken;
But there's no space or time to spare
In which to hate our fellow-men.
And this, my friend, is not the work for you;
Then leave all this for smaller men to do.

THE BUSTER.

His name was Alexander Bartholomew McKay;
That was his "really truly" name the youngster used to say.
It was a name we hoped some day to which he'd lend a lustre;
But then his name for every day was simply this,—
The Buster.

The Buster was a cyclone dressed in a roundabout,
A whirlwind dressed in pantalettes, full steam, and just let out.
And wheresoe'er the Buster blew did ruin always cluster;
Upon the chaos that he made we'd gaze and sigh,
"The Buster!"

A track of devastation always followed in his wake;
For everything the Buster touched the Buster he would break.

It took all Christian charity our outraged souls could muster
To live in the same edifice where domiciled
The Buster.

All peace of mind departed when he entered at the door,
For he sounded like a whirlwind rattling through a china store;
And like a charge of light dragoons, when led by General Custer,
He came down on our bric-a-brac, and smashed it all —
The Buster!

He'd hang the chairs upon the wall, the pictures on the floor,
And hang the poodle upside down upon the cellar door;
And slyly dress the baby up in gran'pa's linen duster,
And hitch the goat in Nell's boudoir, and leave him there —
The Buster!

And so throughout the neighborhood the people could not stay,
In proportion as he flourished did the people move away;

And sad departing caravans along the ways would cluster,
Driven from their homes and firesides by the onslaught of
The Buster.

And no one asked the Buster's health, for all men understood
The Buster's chronic state of health was dangerously good;
But one day did his cheek grow pale, his eye it lost its lustre,
And we all gathered round his crib to see what ailed
The Buster.

And when the fever reached his brain he wandered in his mind,
And played imaginary pranks, the same old reckless kind.
He sang his little rattling songs while all about did cluster;
They cheered his long way through the dark, the long way of
The Buster.

For he had started on that way — the mists grew cold and colder —

And no strong man, no hero soul, e'er marched
upon it bolder;
He'd heard the call which summons all to Fate's
eternal muster,
And with a smile upon his lips he answered back —
The Buster.

And so we watched the Buster, standing by with
bated breath,
As with sweet laughter in his eyes he neared
the gates of death;
And the white mists of that dim shore did all
about him cluster;
And as he vanished in the mist we knew we
loved
The Buster.

We held his hand that we had led through many
a devious track,
And wished that from the cold, cold fog that we
might lead him back;
And when he said "Doo-by" to us we round his
crib did cluster,
And thought how much we loved our boy — how
good he was —
The Buster.

DEACON PETTIGREW'S UNFORTUNATE PRAYER.

I've been the most successful tramp this country ever see;
There ain't no tramp thet soshully stood higher up than me.
Of all the tramps of this hull lan' I wuz the special pet,
An' I graced the highest sukkles of our most exclusive set.

I allus got enough to chew, an' worked my game so shrewd,
An' got so many duds to wear, that I wuz called The Dude;
An' Chris'mus time especially I bagged my highes' game,
An' got new wardrobes for my back, new lustre for my fame.

My specialty wuz deacons, an' a deacon, without doubt,
If you know jest how to fetch him, will tremendously pan out;

An' I uster work him this way: I would go to
him, you see,
Sayin', "I'm a poor ol' sinner, Deacon; won't you
pray for me?"
An' thet would allus fetch him · he would kneel
right down an' pray

That this poor penitent might have his foul sins
took away.
An' I would sob an' shout, "Amen!" an' w'en
he'd closed his prayer
I'd say I felt my sins wuz gone, my soul in good
repair.

This tickled him perdigiously. He'd feed me up
with pie,
An' kill the fatted turkey, an' I'd stay there an'
live high,
An' talk about how good I felt to lose my weight
of sin,
An' loudly shout "Hosannah!" while I tucked
the vittles in.

Then I'd depart, an' leave him feelin' wholly sanc-
tified,
An ulster on my outer man, a puddin' warm in-
side;
But soon my conscience 'ud bob up, I'd feel new
weight of sin —
Then I'd seek another deacon, jest to pray for
me ag'in.

But my Chris'mus business this year is a failure
fair an' square,
Because of Deacon Pettigrew's confounded blun-
derin' prayer.
I tol' him, jest like all the rest, thet I wuz foul
with sin,
An' would he kindly pray for me — an' he — he
waded in.

He started in, an' says, "O Lord," — an' I began
to sob —

"O Lord, I do beseech Thee, give this wretched
tramp a job;
O Thou that showest mercy to the infidel and
Turk,
Give this poor vagabond, I pray, a steady job of
work."

I tell ye I wuz frightened, an' I never wuz so
scat.
I wuz 'feared the Lord would hear him, an' I up
an' grabbed my hat,
An' I scooted off like lightnin'; I wuz frightened
half to death,
An' run four miles afore I dared to stop an'
ketch my breath.

An' so my Chris'mus business hez been sp'ilt
beyond repair;
Though my sins are black as ever I can't trust
no deacon's prayer.
Life's corn hez all been shelled for me; there's
nothin' left but cob,
An' I've lost my faith in deacons, an' I'm 'fraid
I'll git a job.

IS LITTLE BOB TUCKED IN?

"I've gotter go," she said, "an' see
If little Bob's tucked in;
He'll git his death if he's uncovered
In this col' storm an' win'."
"Oh, little Bob's all right," said I,
"You've bin to tuck him in
Four times this evenin', an' I wouldn'
Run 'way up-stairs ag'in."
But Cynthy'd worry, fret, an' stew,
An' raise a dreffle din;
"W'y, I mus' go ag'in," says she,
"An' see if Bob's tucked in."

"W'y, Cynthy, jest set down," I said,
"An' git some good er life.
A feller wants a chance to talk
Some evenin's with his wife."
Then she would take her knittin' out,
Or work upon her spread,
An' make b'lieve lissen, though she didn'
Hear quarter w'at I said.
She wouldn' much more than git set down

Than jump right up ag'in,
An' say, "I mus' run up an' see
If little Bob's tucked in."

Young Bob was allus on the jump,
An' filled the house with din,
An' kicked his quilts off ev'ry night
Fast as she tucked him in.
His laigs they went so fast all day,
As long as it was light,
An' got up speed so they couldn' stop,
An' kep' a-goin' all night.
So Cynthy'd keep a-gittin' up
An' gittin' up ag'in;
"I've gotter look an' see," says she,
"If little Bob's tucked in."

. . . . . .

She stood above the casket there,
She bent to kiss his face,
To pat a stragglin' curl of hair,
Or fix a bit of lace.
Her heart was breakin' with the thought
That Bob, so round an' fat,
So full of pranks an' fun, should sleep
Within a crib like that;
But still she'd fix his little robe,
An' then come back ag'in,

An' take a long, last look, an' see
  Her little Bob tucked in.

That night a storm er snow came on,
  An' how the winds did rave!
The snow fell, like a coverlid,
  On little Bob's new grave.
"I'm glad it snows," his mother said,
  "It looked so hard an' bare,
So hard, so cruel, an' so bleak,
  I cried to leave him there.
But God has sent the blessed snow,
  I think — an' 'tis no sin —
That he has sent his snow to see
  That little Bob's tucked in."

THE GOOD OLD TIMES

WHAT easy times our fathers had! They lived a
natural way;
To earn a half a dollar then they had the whole
long day.
Some fourteen hours did they have this meagre
sum to win,
The whole, long blessed day to earn a half a
dollar in.

How light their lot compared with ours! We have
to spurt and spin,
We who are granted but six hours to earn twelve
dollars in.
Two hundred dollars in a year was all they had
to earn,
But we must earn five thousand — will those old
days ne'er return?

They had twelve months to earn it, fourteen
hours to the day;
But we have to have vacations, which steals half
our time away.

We've only six hours in the day, and eight months
in the year,
In which to earn five thousand — ah, too great
the strain, I fear!

They had so long to earn so little; but our hard
life is such
That we have little time to work in order to earn
much.
How rich our fathers were — in time — how prodi-
gal and rash!
What vast amounts of time they gave for small
amounts of cash.

And how we sigh for those old days of moder-
ate events,
When one had fourteen hours in which to earn
his fifty cents;
But now we work like galley slaves, and wreck
and waste our powers
For fifty cents in sixty seconds, — ah, what a life
is ours!

THE VISION THAT RECEDES

FORWARD, on the same old journey, let us follow where she leads,
Let us chase the beckoning glory of the Vision that Recedes.

Still abides the same old magic in the waving of her hand,
Motioning tow'rd higher regions of her misty tableland;

Still abides the same old purpose still to follow and draw nigh
To the fulness of the glory of the promise in her eye.

Down the vista of long valleys, through the brook-melodious meads,
Up the thunder-blasted mountains, floats the Vision that Recedes.

Onward through the tumbled gorges, onward till the quest is done.
See! she beckons to new empires tow'rd the setting of the sun.

See! her robes float in the distance, borne upon
the onward breeze,
Red with kisses of the sunset, white with blanch-
ing of the seas.

See! she beckons. We are coming! We will fol-
low where she leads;
For we still believe the promise of the Vision
that Recedes.

We will follow where she leads us, through the wild and up the slope,
Through the many tangled valleys to the table-land of hope.

Through the many tangled valleys we will chase the Vision fair,
Till we see the golden sunset mingled with her floating hair.

Yonder, there, beyond the chasm, see her standing on the crest
Of that twilight-girdled mountain at the threshold of the west.

We will follow without resting, we will follow and draw nigh
To the fulness of the glory of the promise in her eye.

There are higher ranges yonder, and she plumes her wings for flight
Tow'rd those visionary mountains on the borders of the night.

Tow'rd those visionary mountains let us follow where she leads,
Let us chase the beckoning glory of the Vision that Recedes.

UNCLE JED'S JOURNEY

I NEVER grouted, never fussed, but lived here
calm an' still;
For twenty year I lived here on the hill in Po-
kumville.
"Don't live here like a snail," said Jim, "within
yer snail-shell curled;
I'll pay yer fare to go out West, an' let yer see
the world."

An' so I got on board the train, an' whirled off
like a breeze;
But all I see upon the trip wuz dirt an' grass
an' trees.
See water, stones, an' sich-like things; sometimes
a brook an' hill.
Sez I to Jim, "All these ere things I see in
Pokumville."

We stopped to see Niagara Falls, thet makes so
much loud talk,
An' we see a mess er water kinder tumblin' from
a rock.

"If you spill water from a spoon," sez I to Jim, sez I,
"'Tis 'zackly the same principul" — an' Jim he couldn' deny.

An' we crossed the Rocky Mountains, Jim said, "I call this grand."
"They're nothin'," sez I, "but great hunks of rock an' dirt an' sand."
An' we come to the Pacific, an' it made Jim look perfound;
But I sez, "I don't see nothin' but some water sloshin' round."

An' we went to sev'rul cities — there wuz nothin' there to see
But jest er mess er houses, an' some folks like you an' me.
An' we come into Chicago. Sez Jim, "How's this for high?"
Sez I, "It's jest like Pokumville — the same ol thing," sez I.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

He talked about the origin
Of sin;
But present sin, I must confess,
He never tried to render less,
But used to add, so people talk,
His share unto the general stock —
But grieved about the origin
Of sin.

He mourned about the origin
Of sin;
But never struggled very long
To rout contemporaneous wrong,
And never lost his sleep, they say,
About the evils of to-day —
But wept about the origin
Of sin.

He sighed about the origin
Of sin;
But showed no fear you could detect
About its ultimate effect;

He deemed it best to use no force,
But let it run its natural course —
But moaned about the origin
Of sin.

THE SOUL'S SPRING CLEANING

YES, clean yer house, an' clean yer shed,
An' clean yer barn in ev'ry part;
But brush the cobwebs from yer head,
An' sweep the snow-bank from yer heart.
Yes' w'en spring cleanin' comes aroun'
Bring forth the duster an' the broom,
But rake yer fogy notions down,
An' sweep yer dusty soul of gloom.

Sweep ol' idees out with the dust,
An' dress yer soul in newer style;
Scrape from yer min' its wornout crust,
An' dump it in the rubbish pile.
Sweep out the hates that burn an' smart,
Bring in new loves serene an' pure,
Aroun' the herthstone of the heart
Place modern styles of furniture.

Clean out yer morril cubby-holes,
Sweep out the dirt, scrape off the scum;
'Tis cleanin' time for healthy souls —
Git up an' dust! The spring hez come!

Clean out the corners of the brain,
  Bear down with scrubbin'-brush an' soap,
An' dump ol' Fear into the rain,
  An' dust a cozy chair for Hope.

Clean out the brain's deep rubbish-hole,
  Soak ev'ry cranny, great an' small,
An' in the front room of the soul
  Hang pootier picturs on the wall.
Scrub up the winders of the mind,
  Clean up, an' let the spring begin;
Swing open wide the dusty blind,
  An' let the April sunshine in.

Plant flowers in the soul's front yard,
  Set out new shade an' blossom trees,
An' let the soul once froze an' hard
  Sprout crocuses of new idees.
Yes, clean yer house, an' clean yer shed,
  An' clean yer barn in ev'ry part;
But brush the cobwebs from yer head,
  An' sweep the snow-banks from yer heart!

THE YOUNG MUSICIAN

JIM warn't no good to fish and shoot,
But only jest to toot an' toot.
He couldn' play tag, an' couldn' play ball;
He jest could toot, an' that wuz all.
He used to toot upon the fife,
Till we grew tired of our life.
For hours he would set an' set,
An' toot upon an ol' cornet,
Upon a bugle, fife, or floot, —
His life wuz one etarnal toot

W'en he came in, the rooms grew bare;
He'd toot, an' solitude wuz there.
Out to the barn we all 'ud fly,
An' hanker for a chance to die. —
All 'cept his little sister Flo,
An' she warn't big enough to know.
She uster stay for half a day,
An' lissen to the terror play;
But she warn't very hard to suit.
She said, "Me 'ike to hear oo toot."

But Jim he tooted day by day,
Until the neighbors moved away,
Until the little trustful Flo
Said, "Jim, w'at make e neighbors go?"
Jim choked a sob, an' said, "They say
Thet I have tooted 'em away.
I can't do nothin' thet'll soot;
I'm good for nothin' but to toot."
"If the whole worl' should go," said Flo,
"Oo toot for me; we'll 'et 'em go."

An' w'en Jim grew to quite a lad,
An' moved away, we all wuz glad,
An' every one wuz filled with glee,—
A sorter gen'l jubilee.
An' there wuz some purposed, they say,
To hev a firework display.
"You're all great, big, mean brutes," said Flo,
"You're great, big brutes to treat him so.
Shoot up your rockets in the sky,
But my Jim's fame'll shoot ez high!"

Now w'en there's music in a man,
Bimeby the worl' will un'erstan';
So Jim, dressed in a bobtail soot,
Brought out the worl' to hear him toot.
They said heaven's music filled his fife,
An anthem frum the deeps er life;

Their souls wuz filled an' overawed,
Jest like w'en Moses talked 'ith God.
An' this young ornery tooter Jim,
They said, played like a seraphim.

He'd toot. They heerd the battle boom
Of armies marchin' to their doom;
An' then they'd hear the thunderous knocks
Of wreck-strewn oceans on the rocks;
An' then he'd toot, an' all wuz dumb
Ez if eternity had come, —
So still thet if you dropped a pin
'Twould sound ez if the earth caved in;
Then all the stars 'ud sing for joy,
Like w'en ol' Adam wuz a boy.

He'd toot ag'in — an awful clash,
Ez if the nations went to smash,
As if within the upper air
The angels fit with devils there;
An' then a strain of wil' delight —
They knowed the angels won the fight;
They knowed no soul wuz left alone,
An' God wuz still upon his throne!
An' jest to think that this wuz *him*,
Thet everlastin' tooter, Jim!
They went an' tol' the news to Flo;
She simply said, "I tol' yer so!"

UNCLE SETH ON KINGS

THEM kings in Europe over there are settin' on
their thrones,
Their thrones built on the necks of men for their
foundation-stones;
But trod-on men, I'm glad to say, have learned to
squirm an' creep,
They're wigglin'; soon you'll see them thrones
come tumblin' in a heap.

"Support my soldiers," says them kings, "my
men who shoot an' hack;"
Till now each peasant carries roun' a soldier on
his back.
But that poor peasant's growin' wise; there's fire
in his blood.
Just wait a bit; you'll see him dump that soldier
in the mud.

"There's men across that bound'ry line that you
must go an' kill;
Go shoot 'em for us," says them kings, "go stab
'em; 'tis our will."

"Wall, kings," bimeby them men will say, "we
don't observe no sign
Thet men are vipers to be killed across that
bound'ry line.

"If you want butchers to kill beeves, a bargain
might be made;

If you want butchers to kill men, w'y, that ar
ain't our trade.
If you want blood by hogsheadsful, don't seek it
at our store;
For we ain't killin' feller-men an' brothers any
more."

Wall, kings, this ain't the kin' er talk to soothe
a royal ear,

But jest erbout the kin' er stuff thet you hev got
ter hear;
For we've about made up our minds to lay you
on the shelf,
For each man now hez come to know thet he's
a king himself.

The kin' er king that Europe wants won't wear
no jewel crown.
An' he is comin' w'en your thrones hev all been
rattled down.
He'll wear a hat like other men, an' set on a
plain chair;
But he will be a king er men, an' rule 'em every-
where.

Not w'at he wears outside his head will be his
kingly pride;
Not w'at he wears outside his head, but w'at he
wears inside.
He'll want no throne; a king er men can allus
rule his own
If he sets upon a nail-kaig, jest as well as on a
throne.

He'll say, this king that's comin', to his soldiers
old an' new,
"Break ranks, my frien's; disband; go home;
ain't no more work for you.

I legalize no more the art of takin' people's lives.
Your job hez gone; break ranks; disband; go home an' see your wives,

"An' beat your sword-blades into scythes. Go home an' cut your grain;
Make green with corn an' w'ite with wheat the blood-red battle plain.
Though mowin' oats an' mowin' grass is tiresome work, but then,
'Tis more respectable an' clean than mowin' feller-men."

This is the kin' er king we want; the ol' style breed of kings,
W'y, they hev bungled long enough, an' made a botch of things.
This king is comin' by an' by, an' let the roun' sky ring,
"Hip, hip, hooray! hip, hip, hooray! God save, God save the king!"

THE MISREPRESENTATION OF ERASTUS POOG

THE interviewer feller from the *Pokumville Gazette*
Come down las' year to see me, an' I hain't forgot it yet;
An' he poked right in to see me, with his smooth an' oily face,
An' asked for my opinyins on the Wilson Dog-Fight Case.

He said he wished to git the news of repersentertive men,
Of the intellechul leaders an' the soshul upper ten;
Of men of broad capasserty an' mental pedigree,
An' intellechul calibre — an' so he come to me.

So I sut my intellechuals immejitly to work;
'Tain't in keepin' with my natur' any mental job to shirk.
I'm proud to say thet work like this I do with ease and grace —
So I expounded unto him the Wilson Dog-Fight Case.

I give er explernation thet wuz pretty middlin' neat,
An' worked the case out p'int by p'int, an' made
the job complete;
An' the reporter said to me, jest 'fore he left my
place,
"You've gi'n the best sy-nopsis of the Wilson
Dog-Fight Case.

Nex' day but one they published what they called

AN INTERVIEW

WITH THE INTELLECHUL LEADER OF OL' DEESTRIC' NUMBER TWO.

ERASTUS POOG'S OPINYINS,

TOL' WITH ELERKUNCE AN' GRACE, OF THE FAMOUS CONTERVERSY OF THE WILSON DOG–FIGHT CASE.

But, O Good Lord! O Mercy! It made me bile to see
How wilfully the lying sheet misrepersented me;
For "Mr. Poog," the paper said, "in his last summin' up,
Inclines to give the pref'rence to Cornelius Dooley's pup."

Cornelius Dooley's terrier! Thet liar heerd me say,
Flat footed, thet Dan Wilson's dog fit best, an' won the day.
Through North and South Ameriky the wretched lie will hum,
The European nations, an' the hull of Christendom.

An' so I stan' before the worl', maliciously held up,
As a backer and admirer of Cornelius Dooley's pup.
I stan' there huggin' thet ar dog 'fore ev'ry lan' an' clime,
An' I'll git into hist'ry so, an' stan' there for all time.

So all the nations er this worl' all comin' time, yer see,

Will git a wrong conception an' false estermunt
er me.
My repertation hitherto hez been unushul good,
But I'll go into history, "The Great Misunder-
stood."

An' sich a misconception — w'y, it never can be
tol',
How it wears upon the feelin's of an intellechul
soul
To go down to futur' ages booked in the wrong
catalogue,
Travellin' down through hist'ry's visters tangled
up with Dooley's dog.

THE SONGLESS POET

"THE world grows old," said the Angel of souls,
"And faints in its despair;
I will cheer its age with the spirit of youth —
I will send a poet there.

"I will smite its gloom with the joy of song,
And make it glad again."
Then a babe was born in a poor man's home,
And a poet had come to men.

And he wandered away from his mother's knee,
And played in his father's field;
And the Angel of souls he waited long
To see his soul revealed.

And there came a day when the careless youth
Heard the Voice of wondrous tone —
The Voice that came from the heart of the world,
And spoke to his heart alone.

Then the Angel of souls bent toward the world,
And listened and listened again
With a hungry ear for the wise, strong words
Of the songs of the poet of men.

But the poet he said, "I am foolish and young,
My words are weak and few;
I will learn the songs of the wise old bards
Who sang when the world was new."

But the Voice within cried, "Speak to men
The words I give to say;
Fear not, but speak the words of the Voice,"—
But the poet answered, "Nay.

"I will learn," he said, "of the bards of the past
Who trod the young earth's sod
When the earth was nearer the heaven than now,
And the prophets talked with God."

"Think not," said the Voice, "that the God that filled
The souls of the bards of yore,
Now leaves the world to his underlings,
And visits his earth no more."

"But my words are weak," the poet said;
"I dare not speak alone.
I must feed my soul on the songs of the past,
Ere I dare to sing my own.

"I will learn of the mighty bards of the past,
Of the ages far and dim" —
And the awful tones of the Voice within
Spake never again to him.

But he filled his soul with the bards of the past:
They thrilled him o'er and o'er;
But the sad old world rolled on in its gloom,
For a poet came no more.

He died; and the song that was in him died,
Unreached his starry goals;
And his soul that had failed of its mighty work
Went up to the Angel of souls.

And the soul stood naked before that gaze
Of fierce, consuming ire;
And the scorn in the look of the Angel of souls
Burned into its depths like fire.

"Ere a bard shall sing as God made thee to sing,
The earth in grief and tears
Must bide its time," said the Angel of souls,
"And wait for a thousand years."

THE PERFECT MAN, BUT —

JIM BUCKS was cut out on the plan
By which they cut the perfect man;
Was cut by Nature's neatest die,
Such as they cut out Adam by;
And his design, I'd have you know,
Was perfect — for he told me so.

And all the reason that Jim Bucks,
His life long, "didn't amount to shucks,"
Was 'cause he couldn't get on the track,
And other people held him back.
Ah, he had gained the door of fame,
And on its door-plate writ his name,
And down the corridors of time
With bass-drum music marched sublime,
Had not his friends — a jealous pack —
His coat-tails seized, and pulled him back
At Fate's express department he
Was tagged for immortality,
But Envy's dog — a vicious pup —
Stole in and chewed his label up;
And so he took no fast express,
But stayed there, labelled, "NO ADDRESS."

Now all good folks prepare to wail,
And listen to his troublous tale,
The saddest since this world began —
The failure of the perfect man.

When Jim was young, and lived in Maine,
An epic sprouted in his brain,
So grand and perfect and complete,
'Twould crowd John Milton off his seat;
But his illiterate mother, when
Her gifted son would seize the pen,
And his wild poet-eye would roll
In the mad tumult of his soul,
Would ask him if he'd fed the hog,
And send him out to chain the dog;
To hold the unfilial setting hen
Upon her half-hatched eggs again;
To scare the kitten from the sink,
Or drive the turkeys out to drink, —
And so John Milton on his throne,
Without a rival, sat alone.

Jim nursed grand projects in his head,
And told his wife, when he was wed,
That he'd change cotton into silk,
And turn cold water into milk.
His bride, blunt, practical, and fat,
Said, "Any milkman can do that."

And afterward, when Jim grew bold,
And tried to change red sand to gold,
Just as the sand began to turn,
His wife would call him down to churn.
And when he turned a medicine-mixer,

And hunted for a life-elixir,
And worked for two whole years upon
"Bucks' Patent New Catholicon,"
Just as he stood upon the high,
Sweet climax of discovery,
His wife made this transcendent soul
Come down to fetch a hod of coal;

To help her while she drove the flies,
Or chop the mince-meat for her pies.
And so the dying world goes on
Without "Bucks' New Catholicon."

Jim might have steered the Ship of State
Between the hidden snags of fate,
And brought her out, unharmed and free,
On destiny's uncharted sea,
There through the halcyon waves to drift;
But Jim had cinders he must sift.
And listening senates Jim might sway,
Had he no butcher's bill to pay;
And Jim, unaided and alone,
Might swim through slaughter to a throne,
And shift the folds of history's scene,
And make Napoleon look green,
And rule o'er distant seas and shores,
If he didn't have to do his chores.
And Jim might be time's grandest bard
If he didn't have to clean the yard,
And watch where the brown pullet lays,
And stretch the line on washing-days.
And doubtless Jim might paint as well
As Rubens or as Raphael;
Or make the living marble grow
To shapes as grand as Angelo;
Or lead a mighty host, like Grant;

Or write philosophy, like Kant;
Or tread the tragic stage, forsooth,
As well as Irving or as Booth, —
If he didn't have to sweep the shed,
And pack his poodles off to bed.

And I bear witness unto you
That all these things are strictly true;
The truth of all these things I know, —
I know it — for Jim told me so.

TWO CALVES

"PERHAPS you know better than I," said Reginald Roosevelt Steuben
To John Hayseed of Grasstown Four Corners, whom he thought very much of a "Reuben."
"But know you, Sir Rusticus, know that I have attended two colleges,
And I am proficient and primed in all of the isms and ologies."

Said John Hayseed of Grasstown Four Corners:
"Sho! then you hev bin to tew colleges?
I s'pose, then, your head-piece is crammed with a tarnal assortment er knowledges?
You put me in mind of a caff thet belonged to Squire Abraham Gleason,
Who hed all the milk from tew cows, and et the hull mess all the season."

"Why do I remind you of him?" asked the youth with a rising inflection.
"He wuz a tremendous large caff — biggest caff ever raised in this section."

THE BOOK-AGENT

I AM not deaf, my fellow-man,
And I can hear you shout;
Your words are audible enough,
"Don't want your book! Get out!"
Don't want my book! It cannot be;
There's some mistake, forsooth.
Don't want my great "Compendium
Of Universal Truth!"

Oh, I can plainly understand
How some dull-minded thing
Might scorn my book; but you! but you!
An intellectual king!
A mammoth-minded man like you,
When once the book is bought,
Will revel in its intellect,
And wallow in its thought!

Why, all your board of selectmen
Have bought the book; and they,
Why they all said, "Be sure to call
On Mr. John C. Ray.

We cannot understand it all,"
Said they, "but Ray knows beans;
When John C. Ray has read that book
He'll tell us what it means."

On mediocre men for sales
I place no firm reliance;
This book was written and designed
For intellectual giants;
For men whose skull-caps bulge with brains,
Who know a thing or two;
For men of towering intellect —
And so I've called on you.

You'll take the book? I knew you would —
Of course you'll want the best;
You'll want morocco back, gilt top,
One that will stand the test.
I'm glad I've met you, Mr. Ray;
Though ignorant and untaught,
I love to meet a man of brains,
Of intellect and thought.

THE HEN-FEVER OF JED WATSON

"After it! follow it!
Follow the gleam!"

TENNYSON.

JED WATSON, he was after it; he followed up
the gleam;
He chased the gorgeous vision of his life's per-
petual dream.
He had a faith that urged him on through all
life's wastes and fens,
That he could build a fortune up by simply rais-
ing hens.

Jed watched his growing pullets, and there came
a vision fair
Of palaces with porticos expanding in the air;
And those cloud-bannered palaces, reared not of
stones or bricks,
Were built of all the unlaid eggs of all his un-
hatched chicks.

He preached the poultry gospel unto all men
everywhere;

His wife said he'd permit a hen to lay eggs in
his hair.
From morning, when the great red sun rose from
the ocean foam,
He'd sit and theorize on hens until the cows
came home.

Hens dangled from his heart-strings, and made
nests in his brain,
And great gigantic hencoops were his palaces in
Spain;
And all his active intellect was focussed like a
lens
Upon the all-absorbing theme of hens, and only
hens.

"One hin will lay twelve hundred aigs, I calker-
late," said Jed,
"An' hatch a thousan' chickens that'll mourn her
w'en she's dead.
These chicks will raise a million more, an' hev a
few to spare;
I'll sell 'em for a dollar each — and I'm a mil-
lionnaire."

So Jed he built a hen-house that was after his
own heart,
Though his own house in which he lived was
falling all apart;

He gave his pullets dainties all, of corn and malt
and meat,
While his own wife and his two boys had plain
salt pork to eat.

He went to all the poultry shows, and travelled
here and there,

And put a mortgage on his farm to pay his rail-
road fare,
And went to hen conventions; and he talked to
poultry men
On "The Boundless Possibilities of the Devel-
oped Hen."

So Jed he followed after it; he followed up the
gleam,
And chased his hen millennium down the vista
of his dream.

"The hin-house door's the way to wealth," said he; "no way is surer."
But every extra hen he owned made him a dollar poorer.

His hens would not forget to eat, but oft forgot to lay;
And if they laid, forgot to hatch — a hen's provoking way.
For hens are haughty as the gods, and whimsical as men,
And in ten billion leagues of hens there's not one perfect hen.

But Jed he followed after it, he followed up the gleam;
For every hen that clucked and scratched was perfect in his dream.
His dream-hens all were perfect hens, but full of faults his real —
There is a marked discrepancy 'twixt actual and ideal.

So poor Jed lived a bankrupt life, and died a debtor slave;
And then his hens went out and scratched the flowers from off his grave.
Ah, myriads of delusions vain have grown since time began!

But the hen-dream is the vainest dream of all
the dreams of man.

But we all follow after it, we follow up the gleam;
And we all raise expensive hens, all dream the
sweet hen-dream.
If my philosophy is true, no man was ever made
Who has not speculated some in this same poul-
try trade.

HERESY IN POKUMVILL

I HAD for neighbors Silas Bean
  Erastus Gove, an' William Smith,
John Andrew Pratt, Horatio Dean,
  But no one to talk Bible with.
For Silas Bean would talk of hops,
  Erastus Gove wuz strong on cows,
An' William Smith on onion crops,
  An' Pratt an' Dean on shotes an' sows.
But Bean, Gove, Pratt, or Dean, or Smith —
Not one could I talk Bible with.

For w'en I tried to talk free-will
  With Dean or with John Andrew Pratt,
They'd talk about the kind of swill
  Was best to make a lean hog fat.
An' w'en I labored to arouse
  Some intress in predestination,
An' talk foreknowledge, they'd talk cows,
  An' hop an' onion cultivation.
A sordid, worl'ly set, you see,
An' not companyins fit for me.

An' how all things wuz foreordained,
  An' how the human will wuz free,
They didn't seem to want explained,
  An' never listened much to me.
An' w'en my argiment bored keen,
  Way into the real Scriptur's pith,
John Andrew Pratt would wink at Dean,
  An' Dean would wink at William Smith,
An' 'Rastus Gove an' Silas Bean
Would jest keep silent an' look green.

But 'twas a glorious day an' good,
  A sweet an' blessed day fer me,
W'en moved into our neighborhood
  Melchizedek Abraham McGee.
With Scriptur' zeal his soul was het;
  An' 'twas an edifyin' sight
To see us set an' set an' set,
  An' jest talk Scriptur' day an' night—
Begin with Moses, an' keep on
Way down to Peter, Jude, an' John.

We grew together, he an' I,
  An' might hev clung together yit,
But on a verse in Malachi
  We made an everlastin' split.
I pleaded—tol' him 'twas absurd,
  The way of his interpertation;

He said the way I wrenched God's Word
  Called for his sternest condemnation;
An' said I'd started on the path
Thet leads to everlastin' wrath.

I tried to push his error by,
  An' pluck it from him limb by limb,
An' crush his wicked heresy,
  An' make an orthodox of him.
He said my soul "wuz reperbate,
  A Pagan with no gleam of light,
Thet walked in unregenerate
  An' dark an' sakerligious night."
This got me riled; I waded in,
  An' soundly thrashed thet man of sin.

An' hard I smote him, hip an' thigh.
  He squirmed about and raised a rumpus;
But I — I knocked his heresy
  To all directions of the compass.
As Michael fit the Dragon, I
  Laid on, an' didn't withhold my hand—
A knuckle argiment, whereby
  I made the Pagan understand.
I beat him fair an' square. Next day
In contrite shame he moved away.

Now I've for neighbors Silas Bean,
  Erastus Gove, an' William Smith,

John Andrew Pratt, Horatio Dean,
  But no one to talk Bible with.
But with a thirst beyond control,
  A hunger growin' more an' more,
I long for some congenial soul
  To lay my Scriptur' views afore.
But Bean, Gove, Pratt, or Dean, or Smith —
Not one can I talk Bible with.

WEARING HIS DAD'S OL' CLO'ES

"YES, I," said Jim, "shall leave this hole —
No place for men of talent here.
I don't propose to squeeze my soul
Down into such a narrow sphere;
And I propose to make my pile,
A good round fortune, fair and square,
And after I shall once strike ile,
I'll grow into a millionaire.
Now, brother Tom, where will you roam?
And what great work do you propose?"
"Well I," said Tom, "will stay to home,
And wear my dad's ol' clo'es."

"Now I," said Sam, "don't care for wealth;
A banker's life is far too tame;
But, bless me! if I have my health
I'll clamber up the heights of fame.
Our statesmen are degenerate,
A poor, debilitated crew;
But I propose to take the state,
And renovate it through and through;
To rule as Cæsar did in Rome,

That is the end that I propose."
"Well, I," said Tom, "will stay to home,
And wear my dad's ol' clo'es."

"Now I," said Bill, "propose to rear
A name to permanently endure,
And gain my province square and clear
Within the realm of literature.
Just look at Shakespeare now, and note
How greatly grand he looms, and tall,
And just because he simply wrote
A lot of writings — that is all.
And so to write a mighty tome
Of thought, like him, do I propose."
"Well I," said Tom, "will stay to home,
And wear my dad's ol' clo'es."

Jim went away, and started fair,
With courage strong and almost rash,
To make a mighty millionaire;
But then he couldn't collect the cash.
And Sam had been a statesman grand,
And ruled where'er our banner floats —
He would have been, you understand,
But then he couldn't secure the votes.
With votes and cash they might have clomb
To heights of wealth and fame, who knows?
But Tom just simply stayed at home,
And wore his dad's ol' clo'es.

And Bill, he might have written thoughts
To make old Shakespeare's pale and sink,
And doubtless would have written lots
If he'd had any thoughts to think.
So Jim and Sam and Bill came back
To their old home, a wan and thin,
A ragged, hungry-looking pack;
And well-fed Tom, he let 'em in.
And now all three no longer roam;
They live on Tom in sweet repose.
All three contented stay at home,
And all wear Tom's ol' clo'es.

BACK-YARD PHILOSOPHER

THERE was a sage — such men are rare —
Who owned a small back yard,
Who looked upon no millionaire
With any great regard.
He stayed within his back yard curled,
And let mankind go by,
Nor wandered up and down the world
In search of novelty.

A traveller, who'd put a belt
Around the planet's girth,
And roamed so far and wide he felt
His home was all the earth;
A travel-stained cosmopolite,
When worn by wanderings hard,
In his migrations chanced to light
Within this sage's yard.

He told the sage of seas he'd sailed,
Through storms and whirlpools dreaded;
Of lofty mountains he had scaled,
Of forests he had threaded;

Of restful days in vales of spice,
  Where perfumed breezes blow;
Of polar jaunts o'er seas of ice,
  And herbless wastes of snow.

"And now, my quiet friend," said he,
  "How is it you're resigned
To live here 'neath this apple-tree
  With a contented mind?"
"Why, my back yard," he made reply,
  Half serious and half gay,
"It 'wanders through eternity,'
  And spans the Milky Way.

"For he who knows his yard, my friend
  And comprehends it right,
Knows the wide earth, from end to end, —
  A true cosmopolite.
The geologic periods
  Have built my yard for me,
A rich black soil that blooms and buds
  From nature's old *débris*.

"The slime of prehistoric seas;
  The silt that nature's fountains
Bore down through long eternities,
  From prehistoric mountains;

The inter-stellar sediment
From unborn planets drifted,—
Are all within my back yard blent,
And sorted, mixed, and sifted.

"The lime from some old saurian's bones
Now feeds my young tomatoes;
The dust of old volcanic stones
Makes sweet my new potatoes;
My parsnips draw their vital force,
My grapes their luscious blood,
From space beyond the solar course,
And time beyond the Flood.

"My back-yard garden looks inert,
And many yards bloom brighter;
But still its strong dynamic dirt
Is powerful as nitre.
The long result of cosmic toil,
Through nature's patient stages,
Has concentrated in its soil
The potency of ages.

"The sunrise and the sunset seas,
That make the old earth new,
Are cisterns whence my cabbages
Draw their supplies of dew;

To light my yard with blossom smiles,
And make my beans climb higher,
The sun through ninety million miles
Sends down his shafts of fire.

"The rose draws fragrance from afar,
And in a flowery focus
Are virtues drawn from every star,
Converging in this crocus.
While here among my plants and trees
I stand the blue sky under,
I'm compassed round with mysteries,
And tabernacled in wonder.

"And, while I watch a flower-bell
To springtime's air unfurled,
I face the great insoluble
Old riddle of the world.
While in my yard I feel the spells
That come from earth and sky,
I'm bosomed deep in miracles,
And lapped in mystery.

"Though rooted in my place of birth,
I have no wings to fly,
My roots encircle all the earth,
My branches fill the sky."

"Ah," said the traveller, "though I span
The world from here to Siam,
You are a wider-travelled man —
Indeed you are — than I am.

THE FAT MAN

"Let me have men about me that are fat."
JULIUS CÆSAR, *Act I., Scene ii.*

I SING the fat man; and I deem
A man's intrinsic worth
Is gauged by his rotundity —
Proportionate to his girth.
The fat man, darling child of fate,
Who in serene repose
Doth nature's stores assimilate,
And turn to adipose,
Who from the boundless universe,
As he's a right to do,
Absorbs a corporosity
Commensurate thereto.

"Let me have men about me," said
Great Cæsar, "that are fat;"
And Julius Cæsar, you'll admit,
He knew "where he was at."
The fat man, everybody knows,
Doth bask in virtue's smile;
For as he grows in adipose

He doth decrease in guile.
And 'tis my creed, though cynics carp
And cavil much thereat,

No man can be entirely good
Till he is fairly fat.

No sour cynic is this man,
No misanthropic churl,

And his wide, manly bosom bears
  The light heart of a girl.
Of nature's bounty he partakes,
  With gratitude and zest,
And in her pantry is no food
  That he cannot digest;
Who from the boundless universe,
  As he's a right to do,
Absorbs a corporosity,
  Commensurate thereto.

THE SONG OF THE OPTIMIST

"Some whiskey is worse than other whiskey; but there is no bad whiskey." — *Kentucky Proverb.*

LET all who live give heed unto
This proverb from Kentucky;
Let men of divers kinds of luck
Believe that they are lucky.
And in the spirit of this creed
Let no man dare be sad;
Some luck is worse than other luck —
But there is no luck that's bad.
Some luck is undesirable,
But no luck wholly bad.

The times may stagnate, mills decay,
And trade be far from frisky;
But times are very much, I ween,
Like old Kentucky whiskey.
A man who lives in any times
Should be exceeding glad;
Some times are worse than other times,
But there is no time that's bad.
All times 'tis good to be alive —
No times entirely bad.

A man whose wife is loud of tongue
Should still be brave and plucky,
And think upon this proverb of
This whiskey of Kentucky.
Yes, let him simply stop his ears,
And struggle to be glad, —
Some wives are worse than other wives,
But there is no wife that's bad.
Some wives are somewhat garrulous
None absolutely bad.

A man who mopes about his work
Should cheer up and be frisky,
And know that every kind of work
Is like Kentucky whiskey.
He who has work enough to do
Should nevermore be sad;
Some work is worse than other work,
But there is no work that's bad.
Some work may be unpopular,
No work entirely bad.

And, like this beverage they drink
As water in Kentucky,
Is life itself, more glad than sad,
More lucky than unlucky.
A man who's lived and had his day
Should pass on, calm and glad;

Some lives are worse than other lives,
But there is no life that's bad.
Some lives may be tumultuous,
But no life wholly bad.

THE PRESIDENT'S BABY

THE President's baby we salute!
Wish her long life and good repute.
Like all babes, may she be the best,
The cutest and the darlingest,
The sweetest and the fairest, she,
Just as all other babies be;
The nicest, prettiest, and best,
And perfect, just like all the rest.

Still, Fortune unto her denies
Her great and most transcendent prize,
The gift no future fate can harm
Of being born upon a farm.

Born in the White House, where the cows
In scented pastures never browse,
Where flower-drunk wild bees never boom
Through meadows lit with summer bloom,
Where her young feet can wander through
No tangled fields baptized with dew,
Nor chase the burnished butterflies,
Live fragments dropped from sunset skies,

Nor follow where the wild brook leads
Its lazy pathway through the meads,
Nor learn the dialect of the breeze,
Nor be a cousin to the trees,
Nor ever feel the home-made charm
That ever broods above the farm.

The farmhouse as a place of birth
Excels all palaces on earth.
Born in the purple is the man
Whose life upon a farm began;
A young prince of the blood is he,
Born to a kingdom wide and free,
And by his kingly right of birth
He reigns a sovereign of the earth.
The earth its natural bounty yields
To this young satrap of the fields,
And spreads her best gifts, full and free,
Before his barefoot majesty.

How full on Nature's bounty feeds
This rhymeless poet of the meads!
What pictures paints she in his eye!
What visions of the earth and sky,
Which the dull blur of many a year
Can never cause to disappear —
Those pictures of the steadfast hills,
Those pictures of the winding rills,

Those lilied meadows, and the fields
That incense of the clover yields,
Those orchards — when the earth and sky
In loving bridal joy draw nigh,
The earth puts on to meet her groom
These robes of blushing apple bloom.

Those pictures, all beyond the gleam
Of any painter's fairest dream,
Go with him through the after years,
Through mounts of joy, through vales of tears,
By distance' soft enchantment kissed,
And bathed in memory's mellow mist.

Life's direst tumult cannot harm
These placid pictures of the farm;
And when Fate's darkest tempests roll
Through the black midnight of the soul,
The visions of those early days
Of life's serene, untrampled ways,
They come to soothe us, fair and calm,
And bring the blessing of the farm.

The President's baby, though she be,
Has missed life's fairest destiny,—
The gift no future fate can harm
Of being born upon a farm.

THE SONG OF THE TRAMP

THE world owes me a living; and
I roam o'er plain and hill,
Through all the highways of the land,
Just to collect my bill.
I own the world by right of birth;
I am the first of gents;
I am a landlord of the earth,
And out collecting rents.

I beg? Come off! I simply dun;
And everywhere I go
I ask, from rise to set of sun,
"Fork over what you owe."
I steal? Get out! I regulate
My tenants as I choose;
I am inspecting my estate,
And gathering in my dues.

In spanking teams of four-in-hand
Plump men go riding by,—
Proud men who sleep on feathers, and
Who gorge themselves with pie.

"I am your landlord," then say I;
"And though you spurn me, still
Your rents are due, and by and by
I'll call round with my bill."

I own the earth. But 'tis too great
For one lone man to mind,
And so I've farmed out my estate
On shares among mankind.
I own the world by right of birth;
I am the first of gents;
I am a landlord of the earth,
And out collecting rents.

THE CONCORD FIGHT

We started forth at break of light
To seek the ground whereon they stood,
Those men who fought the Concord Fight
When men were strong and good.

Calm silence brooded everywhere;
We drank the beauty of the day;
The earth poured incense to the air—
The fragrance of the hay.

Our talk was of those ancient men,
The running fight in field and wood,
The birth-throes of the nation, when
Brave men were strong and good.

And yet we saw strong men that day
At toil beneath the summer sun,
And felt that labor's battle-fray,
In truth, was never done.

Why start, we asked, at break of light
To seek the ground whereon they stood,
Those men who fought the Concord Fight
When men were strong and good?

To-day, and all the years to come,
The battle-music of the fife,
The martial clangor of the drum,
Shall time the march of life.

The long war wages evermore,
The deathless foe must be withstood.
To-day, as in the days of yore,
Are men still strong and good.

THE MAN OF LEISURE'S CREED

I LIVE, I live to fill up space
No other substance fills up;
I live to sponge the human race;
I live to run my bills up;
I live to fill up time between
Last evening and to-morrow;
I live to keep my memory green,
And see what I can borrow.

I live for one who loves me,
And dowers me with pelf;
Through pleasant places shoves me,
My one true love, — myself.
I live that I may still exist,
And still keep on existing;
I live the dinner-bell to list,
And still keep on a-list'ning.

I do not live to toil and seethe,
As other folks are seething,
But, 'cause it's easier to breathe
Than to refrain from breathing.

I live, I live to wear my clo'es,
And get myself admired;
To hold myself from work and woes,
And keep from getting tired.

I live, I live to daily get
Whatever I am getting,
And sit and sit and sit and sit,
Because I'm fond of sitting.
I live, because it's work that kills—
The world owes me a living—
And while my good wife pays my bills,
I render up thanksgiving.

A MIGHTY AMBITION

In this great lan', where all is free, no man can't
aim too high.
Don't shoot at ground-snipe; aim for stars, the
highes' in the sky.
The humbles' men, our elder says, hez climbed
to great renown,
An' shinned up Fortune's highes' tree, an' snatched
her apples down.

"Then struggle on," sez he; "be bold, an' not
afraid to climb,
An' jine the great souls on the heights an' summits
of our time!"
Them words er hisn jest struck home; I vowed
that days an' nights
I'd toil to meet them mighty souls up there upon
the heights.

The way is long, the path is steep, the top is
fur away,
But I will toil an' struggle on, an' climb from
day to day.

My aim is high; but on I press, an' I puppose to be,
Some far-off day, highway surveyor in Deestrict Number Three.

I'll climb that dizzy height some day, an' on the top I'll sit,
W'en I will boss three miles of road an' one whole gravel-pit.
A puppose firm, a courage brave, a will no blows can tame,
Will land a strong ambitious soul upon the heights er fame.

And that's where I puppose to git, where I puppose to be —
Eight shovellers an' two pickaxe men, an' one boy under me;
Ten hosses, an' four dump-cart teams, two ploughs, a yoke er steers —
An' I puppose to reach this height inside er thirty years.

Then do not try to hol' me back; up! up! I mus' be gone;
The motter of ambitious souls is, "On! an' on! an' on!"

My aim is high; but on I press, an' I puppose to be
Some far-off day, highway surveyor in Deestrict Number Three!

THE OLD MAN'S BOY

In Sleepy Hollow Graveyard, when the long day was done,
I sadly mused above the dust that once was Emerson;

And where caressing zephyrs the clustered greenery wave,
I stood in chastened reverie at Hawthorne's quiet grave.

On this green hill, 'neath sun and stars, will sleep
from age to age
The Dreamer in his dreamless sleep, the Mystic,
and the Sage;
The best (the crown of all her years) our
Western World can show,
The fullest flowerage of our time, is buried here
below.

They sleep, nor heed the winter's storm, nor feel
the summer breeze —
They sleep, but the strong words they spake are
blown o'er all the seas.
I turned away where bending grass o'er humbler
burial waves,
And there beheld a gray old man who walked
among the graves.

"Great men are buried here," I said. He wiped
a falling tear.
"Great men," he sighed, "I know — but then —
my boy is buried here.
God gave them strength, and length of days till
all their work was done;
My boy — my boy we buried here before his work
begun!"

The Dreamer and the Mystic — I left them to
their fame,

And silent left the poor boy's grave — the grave without a name.
Their home is in the thought of men, in nations wide apart;
The boy finds love as warm as theirs in his old father's heart.

I.

When first moved into Rundown young Dr. Sarah Brown,
The little town of Rundown was a very run-down town.

The steeple had dropped off the church; the schoolhouse had caved in;
And nothing flourished in the town but ignorance and sin.

The graveyard at the village end in silent peace outspread;
But the live men of that village in that graveyard all were dead.

For there 'are those communities that by some means contrive
To get its live men in the grave and keep its dead alive.

So when moved into Rundown young Dr. Sarah Brown,
The little town of Rundown was a very run-down town.

II.

When Sarah came to Rundown, the village had no "go;"
But Sarah hitched its trolley to another dynamo.

For Sarah every morning hitched up her spanking steed,
And seized her medicine valise, and rushed off at full speed.

She was nineteenth-century lightning — she went so fleet and fast —
Mixed with the cold molasses of a mediæval past.

And so at this tempestuous speed she travelled every day;
A cyclone through a cemetery, she whirled upon her way.

III.

And young Erastus Peterson forthwith began to stir;
For young Erastus Peterson fell dead in love with her.

And young Erastus Peterson put on a bosom shirt,
And from his finger-nails removed the immemorial dirt;

And from his immemorial sleep he wakened with a bound,
And, moved by Dr. Sarah Brown, began to hustle round.

And henceforward from that hour there were two live men in town —
The young Erastus Peterson and Dr. Sarah Brown.

IV.

Now in the town of Rundown, as you may well suppose,
In this somnolescent village there were somnolescent beaus.

And every girl who had a beau, she told him —
every one —
What an elegant young fellow was Erastus Peterson.

And all these girls to all these beaus made such
a hullabaloo,
That, as young Erastus hustled, all these fellows
hustled too.

So all these fellows hustled; and soon the whole
slow town
Was hitched unto the dynamo of Dr. Sarah
Brown.

V.

And their turgid cold molasses of a mediæval past,
Struck by nineteenth-century lightning, then began
to trickle fast.

And to-day no livelier village for its enterprise
and snap,
And its *fin de siècle* vigor, can be found upon the
map.

And they wished to name it Brownville; but 'twas
plain it couldn't be done,
For she who once was Sarah Brown was Sarah
Peterson.

But she said, "Name it Boomville, for that is much the same."

And they named the village Boomville; they could find no better name.

A MILLIONAIRE PAUPER

How can you set there an' purtend you don't
know who I be?
This land, ez fur ez you can see, it all belongs
to me.

Don't know me? Well, I am surprised! Don't
know me? Well thet's fine!
This county fer ten miles aroun' is ev'ry acre
mine.

The hull blame thing belongs to me, I own it
every rod;
An' you don't know me? Is it true sich igno-
rance stalks abroad?

Them fields, them woods, them parsture lands, ez
fur ez you can see —
An' you, you fail to reker'nize a millionaire like
me?

What's thet? You own this land yourself thet
stretches near and far?
You are the sole proprietor? You mean you
think you are.

You've got the deed in black an' white for all
this wood an' field?
You've got the parchment duly sworn, recorded,
signed, an' sealed?

I'm glad to meet ye. Howdy do? Afore I fin'
my grave
I'm glad to meet the feller who hez been my
faithful slave.

For you have been a slave to me, have taken all
my care,
An' kerried all my burdens while I played the
millionaire.

You've payed my taxes ev'ry year, and paid all
bills when due,
An' done my worryin' for me — I'm much obliged
to you.

An' coz you have the title-deed held firmly in
your hand,
You've got the crazy notion you're the owner of
this land.

An' though I feel you are insane, an' crazy ez
can be,
You've been a useful maniac an' lunatic fer
me.

For I insist this land is mine; for standin' at this tree,
The land is mine for miles aroun', ez fur ez you can see.

Why not? Why not? For me is blown the clover's sweet perfume,
For me the pussy-willers bud, for me the apples bloom;

For me the mowin' fields send up the incense of the hay,
For me the medder brook tunes up its rattlin' song all day;

For me is blown the balsam breath your mighty forest yields,
An' I inhale — don't cost a cent — the healin' of your fields.

I have no plantin' to be done, yit from the flowers an' dew,
An' from the medder smells, I reap a bigger crop than you.

An' pray, why should I plant an' hoe, why should I dig an' plow,
When crops an' harvests of delight drop down from ev'ry bough?

An' so I say this land is mine, an' I still hold
it dear;
But I will let you pay the tax, I'll never inter-
fere.

An' you may wave your title-deed triumphantly
in air,
But I am certain, just the same, that I'm a mil-
lionaire.

But I am glad to see you, sir. I'm sure I'm glad
to see
A man who's drudged so many years, and done
my chores for me.

Come down an' see me, won't you, sir? I'm sure
I'd like to be
Much more acquainted with the man who's done
so much for me.

Where do I live? The County Farm, way over
there, you see;
You'll find me there, when I'm at home — room
Number 23.

THE CANDIDATES AT THE FAIR

THE two opposing candidates went to the county fair.
One had cologne upon his clothes, one hayseed in his hair;
One travelled burdened with ten trunks that bore his twenty suits,
One bore the soil from fourteen towns upon his shineless boots.

The prim dude candidate was wise in economic lore,
And soaked them full of statesmanship till they could hold no more.
He cited economic laws in terms abstruse and deep,
And principles and precedents until they went to sleep.

He quoted from Calhoun and Clay and Jefferson at will;
From Adam Smith, Sir Thomas More, and from John Stuart Mill;

From Plato and from Aristotle, Guizot, and Herbert Spencer;
And all the while he talked and talked their ignorance grew denser.

And then the hayseed candidate stood up there at the fair,
While his unlimbered whiskers waved and flaunted through the air,
And told them how he raised his corn, and how he cut his hay,
And how through fifty working years he'd made his farming pay.

He told them how he'd ained his swamp, and how he'd built his fence,
And showed them what hard work can do when mixed with common-sense.
"And now send me to Congress, friends," said plain old Silas Brown,
"An' I'll make things you sell go up, an' things you buy come down.

"I hain't no learned prinserples; I'm plain ol' Stick-in-the-Mud,
A blunt, plain man like you an' you, an ignorant ol' cud;

An' I don't know no books an' things, like this
wise chap from town;
But I'll make things you sell go up, an' things
you buy come down.

"I ain't no statesman who can talk purtection or
free trade;
My han's too stiff to hol' a pen, that's made to
hol' a spade;

Them ten-foot eddicated words my tongue can't
wallop roun';
But I'll make things you sell go up, an' things
you buy come down.

"I can't talk on the currency, nor on the revenue,
An' on the laws an' statoots I'm as ignorant as
you;
An' I jest simply promise you, sure's I am Silas
Brown,
I'll make the things you sell go up, an' things
you buy come down."

The fair-ground echoed wide with cheers and loud
huzzas thereat;
For who can ask a better scheme of statesman-
ship than that?
And next week at the polls he beat his rival
high and dry—
But things we sell continue low, and things we
buy are high.

BILL, TOM, NED, DICK, PETE, JIM, AND ME

BILL, Tom, Ned, Dick, Pete, Jim, and me,
We allus managed to agree.
When we wuz schoolboys and wuz small
The same school district held us all.
We flew our kites from the same knoll,
An' swum in the same swimmin' hole;
We bobbed for fish in the same pond,
An' hunted the same woods beyond;
We chased through the same pasture lot
The woodchucks that we never caught;
Loved the same girl, who, sad to tell,
Got merried to a city swell.
Bill, Tom, Ned, Dick, Pete, Jim, and me,
We allus managed to agree.

We allus said w'en we were growed
We'd trudge through life by the same road.
Bill, Tom, Ned, Dick, Jim, Pete, and me
Would allus manage to agree.

But Bill he went to raisin' chicks,
An' Tom he went to makin' bricks;

Ned stayed at home to work, an' Dick
He run a sawmill at the crick;
Jim went to raisin' garding sass,
An' Pete he give his time to grass;
An' me — wall, I, you understand,
I am a railroad section hand.

But Bill, Tom, Ned, Dick, Jim, an' Pete
Are not the same I uster meet.
They take no interest, I declare,
In keepin' railroads in repair.
For w'en I bring the subject round
On how to keep the road-bed sound,
Bill goes off on his poultry craze
And the best kind of hens to raise;
An' Tom, it seems, don't care a whack
'Bout any kind of railroad track,
But his whole conversation sticks
For everlastingly on bricks;
An' Ned, he almost allus fails
To take an' interest in rails,
An' w'en I tell him how to strike
The proper way a railroad spike,
He'll go to talkin', sure's yer born,
About the way to raise good corn;
An' allus w'en I talk to Dick
'Bout how to run a han'car quick,
He'll switch to sawmills in a minute,

An' he don't take no interest in it.
You talk to Jim the whole day long
'Bout how to make a culvert strong,
So it won't break and go to smash,
An' he'll switch off on succotash,
On pie-plants, pear-trees great an' small,
An' other sich-like fol-de-rol.
You talk to Pete about the way
To keep ol' sleepers from decay,
He'll drop the hull blame thing, an' pass
To timothy an' red-top grass,
An' talk an' talk for half a day
'Bout the best-sellin' kind er hay.

Bill, Tom, Ned, Dick, Jim, Pete, an' me
Can't never manage to agree.
Once roses all on the same stem,
I've kinder grown away from them.
For I hev kep' through storm an' strife
A higher intellechul life;
An' I couldn' hope they'd allus be
Companions suitable for me;
An' I couldn' hope they'd understan'
The intellec' of a railroad man.
But I'll keep up through storm an' strife
My higher intellechul life,
An' try to love in very truth
The humble cronies of my youth.

W'EN FATHER BOUGHT A BAR'L ER FLOUR

W'EN father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
It was a most tremenjous hour
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A very huge event.
He'd go off with the dingle cart;
We'd gather round to see him start,
And watched him as he went.
We'n father bought a bar'l er flour,
It wuz a great an' sollum hour.

W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
We watched a long and tedious hour;
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
We watched for him to come.
Bimeby he came, drove on the place,
A mixed, sad, glad, look on his face,
A look that made us dumb.
We seen its force, an' felt its power,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour.

W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
We noted if the bread was sour,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
Or was it riz or flat;
An' wuz the doughnuts light an' sweet,
An' wuz the flapjacks fit to eat,
The pie-crust, an' all that.
These questions thronged the dinner-hour,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour.

W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
We all discussed for many an hour,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
Its varus ins an' outs.
If it wuz nice for slump or cake,
An' if it left a stomach-ache,
An' all our hopes an' doubts.
It wuz a most tremenjous hour
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour.

W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
The neighbors called from hour to hour,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
An' tried our bread an' pie.

Some said 'twas good, but 'twouldn't last,
'Twas sweet, but it would go too fast;
Some thought the price too high.
The neighborhood discussed the power
An' strenk of that ar' bar'l er flour.

W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
A bar'l er flour,
Hez been a long-remembered hour,
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour,
That I shall not fergit.
Though I fit through the Civil War,
An' then got merried, still, by gor,
I reckerlect it yit;
An' I cannot fergit the hour
W'en father bought a bar'l er flour.

WHEN CY PUT ON HIS MEETIN' CLO'ES

W'EN Cy put on his meetin' clo'es,
His go-to-meetin' suit,
There wuz no critter, I suppose,
No fish, nor bird, nor brute,
No anything on earth below,
Or up there in the sky,
That made one-half the holy show,
Or looked ez bad as Cy.
There is no critter, high or dry,
On earth below or in the sky,
No beast, or fish, or bird, or brute,
Or any kin' of a galoot,
Can look one-half as bad as Cy
W'en he put on that suit.

W'en Cy put on them clo'es, his j'ints
They clanked like a lawn-mower;
An' his two ears in pick-ed pints,
Hung down two inches lower.
One eye looked up, one eye looked down,
An' both eyes looked like murder;
An' all the hair upon his crown,
Stuck up two inches furder.

An' when Cy smiled he hurt his face,
An' put his cheek-bones out of place.
One foot it lagged behind, belated,
An' one rushed on exhilerated;
For all his bones were out of place,
An' all his limbs mismated.

W'en them ar clo'es hung roun' his shape,
W'en Cy put on thet suit,
He looked too bad to let escape,
An' yit too green to shoot.
The deacon's breath came quick an' quicker,
Then in a laff perdigious
He bust in sich a graceless snicker,
It sounded irreligious.
An' so Cy broke the Sabbath Day,
W'en he dressed out in thet array.
The deacon laffed until he cried,
An' Pratt's boy said, "he liked to died."
The elder's buttons broke away—
He bust in mirth unsanctified.

His crooked laigs they looked like prongs,
His feet like flattened spoons;
He walked as if a pair of tongs
Were dressed in pantaloons.
His arms went flappin' like a flail,
A danger to beholders,

Like two codfishes by the tail,
Hitched onto his two shoulders.
W'en Cy put on his Sunday best,
His knee-j'ints bulged out north by west.
An' west by south stuck out his toes;
In all directions turned his nose,
W'en Cy in Sunday duds wuz dressed,
W'en Cy put on them clo'es.

An' w'en ol' Cy he came to die,
He sez, "W'en I am gone,
I wish to travel to the sky
With my ol' trowsis on."
He gasped between each racking cough,
"Let my ol' duds be worn,
Or I shall make a circus of
The resurrection morn.
Leave off them go-to-meetin' clo'es,
Or I shall wish I'd never rose;
For Peter, he wouldn't let me in,
Because 'twould be a dreffle sin
For me to go in with them cloe's,
An' set all heaven a-grin."

THE POET'S SONNET

ONCE a poet wrote a sonnet
On his Angelina's bonnet.

Then he published it on vellum;
For that is the way to sell 'em.

Then to every living poet
Did he send it round to show it.

Then to every book reviewer
Did he send this literature.

To receptions did he bring it,
And recite it, read it, sing it.

To the papers did he tote it,
And he asked 'em all to quote it;

Told the public readers 'bout it,
And he asked 'em all to spout it.

For two years through all the nation
He received congratulation.

Then again the sonnet took form,
For he brought it out in book-form.

Then he sent to each reviewer
This new gem of literature.

Then he paused for recreation,
And enjoyed his reputation.

For five years he lived upon it —
Then he wrote another sonnet.

A DISREPUTABLE MARTYR

THE morality was plastic
Of the hero that I sing,
And his conscience was elastic
As an india-rubber string;
And he had no aspiration
For the lofty and the good,
And in my estimation,
Did no better than he should.
And in my plain, unvarnished way,
I here and now desire to say,
His mind dwelt more on present fun than
on the Judgment Day.

And his speech was not resplendent
With a deep and hallowed grace;
For a Sunday superintendent
It would hardly be in place;
In a missionary meeting,
Gathered in a sacred cause,
It would hardly get the greeting
Of tumultuous applause.
And here and now it should be stated,

That, in some tales that he narrated,
'Twould be exceedingly polite to say that he
prevaricated.

And, to speak of his iniquity
As honest men should speak,
His ethical obliquity
Was markedly oblique.
I do not wish to slander,
Nor to pile it on too thick;
But I say with perfect candor
That he was a crooked stick.
And here and now I would imply,
That to old Satan's watchful eye
Young Jim's transactions, in the main, were
fairly satisfactory.

Jim, he went to every fire,
When he heard the fire-bell's peal,
With a passionate desire
Just to see what he could steal.
For in a conflagration,
If a fellow has sharp eyes,
He can make appropriation
Of some valued merchandise;
And Jim was not so good and pure
But he'd buy merchandise, I'm sure,
By other than the formal way of old-time
cash expenditure.

Jim, he went to one great fire
Last May, with his usual zeal
And habitual desire
Just to see what he could steal;
And he'd stolen some things, maybe,—
But I'll not particularize,—
When, "My baby! Save my baby!"
Came a woman's piercing cries.
"Yes; I'll save yer kid," Jim said;
And she pointed overhead—
"Up there in the highest story! Hurry!
Hurry!" and Jim fled.

And he vanished through the fire,
While the falling timbers broke,
While the flames in many a spire
Vanished into clouds of smoke;
And when the roof came crashing
Down in ruin to the ground,
Through the red flame came Jim dashing,
With the baby safe and sound.
The woman, with her arms outspread,
Reached forth and grasped her little Ned.
Jim placed him in his mother's arms—and
at her feet dropped dead.

Then two book-leaves, with red flashes
Flaming in the fervent heat,

Fell and turned to snow-white ashes
Lying at the dead man's feet.
"Ah! those pages once were checkered
With Jim's sins," a fireman said,
"The Recording Angel's record
Of the man that lies there dead.

But when he saw that fellow die,
He slashed these leaves out. There they lie.
Jim's ledger's clean up there to-night. They
keep books honest in the sky."

PETER'S PICTURE

W'EN Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur',
He hed an agonizin' look;
His neck wuz twisted in a crook,
  Jest like a bow-constricter;
His hair wuz flyin' all about,
Besides, his tongue wuz lollin' out;
Seems if his ears they flopped an' shook,
W'en Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur'.

W'en Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur',
He said that he perposed to look
Jest like them picturs in a book,
  Jest like a Roman victor.
But his ol' whiskers stood out straight,
So straight a forty-seven pound weight
Couldn' pull 'em down; an' there he set,
With one eye open, t'other shet,
W'en Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur'.

W'en Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur',
He looked so desp'rit an' forsook,
Hed sich a stranglin', chokin' look,
  Jest like a bow-constricter.
An' w'en the man showed him the proof,
I thought that Peter'd raise the roof;
He couldn' control hisself at all,
But hed to set right down an' bawl,
W'en Peter hed his pictur' took,
  W'en Peter hed his pictur'.

THE GRADED STREET

OUT in the country sixty year
I worked an' struggled like a steer.
I dug the groun' 'ith courage stout,
An' dug ten thousan' dollars out.
An' then I bought a house in town,
An' moved my goods and family down;
Because I'd grown so ol' an' rich,
An' wished conveniences, an' sich.

W'en I want water, all I do
Is jest to kinder turn a screw,
An' out she comes. If I want light,
I turn another screw at night.
Folks bring my groceries an' meat,
An' all I do is set an' eat.
For city folks jest pay their bill,
Get all they want, an' jest set still.

My life was jest about complete
Till they came roun' to grade my street.
An' then they went to diggin' roun',
An' dug the whole top off the groun';

An' then they lef' me stan'in' there
Stuck up some twenty foot in air;
An' they jest yanked away the street,
Right out from un'erneath my feet.
My house is stuck up, on my soul,
Jest like a bird's house on a pole.
I don't see how I'll git about,
Unless my angel wings sprout out;
An' this, I think, can't hardly be
Upon a chap as mad as me.

An' now the miser'ble ol' town
Says I mus' build my front steps down;
An' run 'em down fer twenty feet
Until they find an' strike the street.
They went an' stole my street away,
An' they will wait till Judgment Day
Before I'll shin down twenty feet,
To try to find some other street.
For I purpose that them same men
Shall bring that same street back again!
I'll jest go down, hand over hand,
Upon a rope till I strike land.
Build front steps down! I'm no sich loon;
I'll leave my house by a balloon,
Or any other kinder way
Before I'll build them steps, I say.

I've tol' the mayor, flat an' free,
To bring that ar street back to me;
To bring it back, an' dump it down,
Or I purpose to sue the town.
The mayor set there, like a caff,
Jest all he did was set an' laff.

Says I, "You've yanked away the street,
Right out from un'erneath my feet;
An' you have lef' me stan'in' there,
Stuck up some twenty foot in air.
Ain't you a purty kind er mayor?
You'll wait until your hair is grayer

Before I buil' my front steps down,
An' poke aroun' to fin' the groun'.
The mayor set there, like a caff,
An' all he did was set an' laff.

But what's he more'n a thief, I say,
Who comes an' steals a street away?
Though he's the city's boss an' chief,
He's nothin' but a common thief.
An' I shall fight the man like sin,
Until he brings it back ag'in.

A MODERN MALTHUSIAN

I CAN'T git no job;
'Tain't no good to try.
There is too many born,
An' there ain't enough die;
There's too big a crowd
Fer a man to wedge in.
I can't find no job,
An' I sha'n't try ag'in;
You can't git no job
In the kentry or town.
There is too many folks in the worl',
An' there ain't enough jobs to go roun'.

W'en the worl' wuz cut out,
'Twas cut out too small;
'Twarn't made big enough
Fer its purpose at all.
The crowd is jammed in,
In a terrible cram;
Best thing you can do
Is git out er the jam.
So I've crawled from the crowd,
An' I've jest settled down.

There is too many folks in the worl',
An' there ain't enough jobs to go roun'.

My talents is large,
But they've no room to grow;
The worl' is too small,
An' they don't get no show.
"An'," sez I to myself,
"You, Sempronius Lang,
Clear out er this mob,
An' git out er this gang;
For the mob'll jest crowd,
An' jest trample ye down.
There is too many folks in the worl',
An' there ain't enough jobs to go roun'."

An' it don't do no good,
An' I ain't goin' to look,
Fer all places is filled,
An' the jobs is all took.
The worl' it wuz built
On a too narrer plan;
So I'm a shut-out,
An' a left-over man.
So what is the good
For to rush up an' down?
There is too many folks in the worl',
An' there ain't enough jobs to go roun'.

There wuz jest one job left
  In Bill Green's cotton-mill;
All the one I could find
  In the hull worl' to fill.
But I've sich a big heart,
  This one job of my life,
I jest give it up,
  Gen'rous-like, to my wife;
An' there ain't no more jobs,
  So I've jest settled down.
There is too many folks in the worl',
An' there ain't enough jobs to go roun'.

THE SONG OF THE BROOK

I HASTE by hill and valley,
  I haste by mead and lea,
I am the message-bearer
  From the mountains to the sea.
I am the mountains' courier,
  And every meadow thrills
While I carry to the ocean
  The tidings of the hills;
And every meadow hears it,
  For, as I go each day,
Lest I forget the message,
  I sing it all the way.

And the lily blooms grow whiter,
  And loud the meadows ring
With the exultant gladness
  Of the message that I sing.
What do I tell the ocean?
  That all the hills are strong,
And all the forests on their backs
  Melodious with song;
That to the youth of nature
  The hoary hills are true,

And that the ancient mountains
And this old world are new.

What do I tell the ocean?
That on the sun-kissed hills
Are perfumed winds of healing,
And music-haunted rills;

From their eternal altars
For evermore shall rise,
In all its Eden freshness,
New incense to the skies.
The hazy mists of summer,
That o'er their summits dwell,
Brood like a benediction,
That says that all is well.

What do I tell the ocean?
I say the hills are fair,

And drink an ever-fresher health
From heaven's infolding air;
That sunward ferns are springing
Within their deepest glooms,
And that the fields are drifted
With snow of apple-blooms;
And that there's mighty music
Where mountain torrents meet;
And that the heart of nature
For evermore is sweet.

What do I tell the ocean?
I say the hills are high,
But draw new youth each morning
From the chalice of the sky.
They drink the virtue of the day,
The great sun's heat and light,
And bathe themselves in stillness
And the silence of the night;
And the winds around their summits,
With strong, triumphant breath,
Proclaim, above a land of graves,
That there can be no death.

What do I tell the ocean?
That life blooms everywhere;
That the day is glad with music,
And all the world is fair;

And the proud tiger lilies,
  And meadow grasses near,
And all the drooping willows
  And alders bend to hear.
My song of joy and gladness,
  My song of hope and glee,
Makes one long strip of greenness
  From the mountains to the sea.

So I will tell the ocean
  What the strong mountains say,
With all the added gladness
  I have gathered on the way;
That the smile of deathless beauty,
  As at creation's birth,
With all its old, eternal charm,
  Still glorifies the earth.
To tell this to the ocean
  I through the land am whirled,
So that its mightier anthem
  May tell it to the world.

UNCLE TED AND BOSTON

Ol' Boston sets there by the sea, an' hez a thousan' arms,
Thet reaches out through all the lan', through all the hills and farms;
Strong arms they be, thet never rest, but pull by night an' day,
An' feel new strength w'en they hev drawn our boys an' gals away.

An' fingers on those mighty arms through every valley dart,
An' us ol' fellers feel 'em allus pullin' at our heart;
For w'en the arms of Boston once are drawn aroun' a lad,
They pull him from his mother's arms, an' pull him from his dad.

For there is sights in Boston, so they tol' me, thet are gran';
For there is centred all the brains an' money of the lan',

Houses that start down undergroun', an reach up
to the sky,
An' men almost too rich an' gran' an' good an'
wise to die.

An' men there jest know everything, and lug it
in their heads;
For in Boston wisdom's ketchin', and, like the
mumps, it spreads.
So my boys went down to Boston — I couldn't
keep 'em here —
An' I went down to visit 'em an' see the sights
last year.

But everybody laffed at me, an' called me an ol'
duff,
Because I didn't talk like them, an' wear their
kin' er stuff;
For them wise men in Boston, they ain't wise
enough to know
A biled shirt doesn't make a man, who has no
heart below.

She may hev poet fellers whose songs fill earth
an' skies,
An' flosserfers, an' things like that; but I can
flosserfize.

My flosserfy is this: A man may live an awful while,
An' keep his clo'es in fashion, an' his soul be outer style.

An' I'm jest ez good ez Boston. Let her throw her arms aroun', —
There's one ol' chap clings to the hills, an' she can't pull him down;
An' I will wear my ol' plain duds no sun or rain can spile,
Nor worry 'bout the fashion-plate, but keep my soul in style.

TOM AND BILL

I.

Tom uster talk till all was dumb;
But Bill would set an' twirl his thumb.

Us boys at school would set around,
While Tom would crack the air with sound.

He showed us all his future course —
How he would shake the universe;

An' how his name, from sea to sea,
Would rattle through our history.

Bill crossed his laigs, an' set there dumb,
Jest set there still, an' twirled his thumb.

II.

An' we all thought that Tom was great,
An' big enough to rule the State.

Beside him Bonyparte looked small;
An' Washington warn't very tall;

An' General Jackson side er him —
A babe 'longside a seraphim!

"White House'll be too small for him
W'en he is Presidunt," said Jim.

But Bill, he on'y set there dumb,
Jest set there still, an' twirled his thumb.

III.

An' w'en Tom went away from school,
He said his teacher was a fool;

An' then he took five hours to show
How much his teacher didn't know;

Then talked ten hours to make us see
Jest how much more he knowed than he.

This wisdom-reservoy poured forth
Its waters on the dried-up earth.

We sunk — we were too tired to walk —
Drowned in the ocean of his talk.

But Bill upon the shore set dumb;
He jest set still, an' twirled his thumb.

IV.

The war broke out; an' evr'y night
Tom showed his neighbors how to fight.

He'd make each night — at Blancom's store —
His sabre whiz, his cannon roar.

Oh, loud would swish his flashin' blade!
An' loud would roar his cannonade!

An' fierce he swum out from the shore
Into a swashin' sea of gore!

Each night he drilled his soldiers raw,
An' fought, an' finished up the war!

He did it — up North — with his mouth;
The climate was too hot down South.

V.

But Bill, he raised a troop of men,
An' marched away as cap'n then.

They made him colonel. He stood dumb,
An' simply blushed, an' twirled his thumb.

But 'neath red battle's fiery suns
He did loud talkin' — through his guns.

W'en general, he put on no starch;
An' all he said was, "Forrerd! March!"

He made no speech as on he led;
"Forrerd!" and "Fire!" was all he said.

An' through a hunderd battles grim
He let his loud guns speak for him.

VI.

Back through the lan' he helped to save,
An' make too pure for a slave;

Back from the awful, bloody years,
Back through an avenoo of cheers,

Marched General Bill. The loud hurrahs
Rolled up, an' reached the list'nin' stars.

He rode through all the loud cheers dumb;
But dropped a tear, an' twirled his thumb.

VII.

But Tom still goes to Blancom's store,
An' talks, as in the days of yore;

Still shows his wondrous wealth of brains
By criticising Bill's campaigns.

He shows the great mistakes Bill made;
Shows all his actions second grade;

Shows his own military skill
Is far be-end the reach of Bill,

An' how, if Bill hed done *his* ways,
The war had closed in thirty days.

An' once up to the State House, where
Ol' Bill sets in the guv'nor's chair,

Did ol' Tom go — he warn't afraid —
To tell Bill the mistakes he'd made.

An' Bill, he jest set still there, dumb;
He jest set still, an' twirled his thumb.

FATE

O'ER Moses' wave-tossed cradle in the Nile
I stood, and smoothed the torrent's troubled breast,
Until it lulled the unconscious babe to rest.
On a frail caravel, o'er many a mile
Of unploughed waste of sea, I stood; and while
The strong Columbus gazed into the west,
And mutinous sailors mocked his mighty quest,
I gave the Admiral courage with my smile.

I led the strolling players to the town
Where Avon's waters o'er the pebbles broke,
And the young Shakespeare played in childish joy.
He heard the play-king, listened to the clown;
And there the world's supremest poet woke
Within the heart of that young, careless boy.

THE BATTLE IN THE MIST

FROM the loud squabbles of the men of thought,
The bitter hates of bard and scientist,
The feuds between sage and religionist,
I turn away with sadness overwrought,
With all their fierce logomachy distraught;
For they are warriors fighting in the mist —
Friend smiting friend for an antagonist,
And brother piercing brother, all for naught.

I turn aside from all this loud uproar
Of men of peace transformed to sons of strife,
The tumult of their ineffectual rage;
And find a peace, increasing more and more,
Within the inner calm of that great life,
The godlike tolerance of Shakespeare's page.

THE VOYAGE

OUT from the Harbor of the Shadowy Shore
We sail into the gladness of the day;
A breath of spice from islands far away
Allures us on to where the deep seas roar.
The lightnings play about us, and before
Our cleaving prow the tempest marks its way
With broken wrecks; but still we cannot stay.
A voice beyond the storm calls evermore.

We spread our sails to catch the wind and breeze,
The wandering zephyr, or the simoom's breath;
And on we sail, nor strength nor purpose fails,
Till through the sunset of alluring seas,
Through twilight splendors, do we drift toward death, —
The silent Isle of Unreturning Sails.

MY SABBATHS

My Sabbaths come not with the hastening weeks,
Nor with the phases of the changeful moon;
They lie outside of time, but, late or soon,
With glad purpureal and auroral streaks
Of the full-risen morning, flush the cheeks
Of the soul's midnight, and I feel the boon
Of life's supremest effluence at its noon,
And gain an outlook from its highest peaks.

The old earth and the ancient heavens grow new;
God's throne, I feel, sits calm in central peace;
The worlds to that old primal music roll
Upon those holy days, — alas! so few, —
Those sacred days of freedom and release,
Those dateless, timeless Sabbaths of the soul.

THE COMING AMERICAN

[Read at Mr. Henry C. Bowen's Annual Fourth of July Celebration, at Roseland Park, Woodstock, Conn., July 4, 1894.]

On the Fourth of July we all love to dilate
With the thought that we are inexpressibly great;
That we're all legatees of fate's fairest bequest,
And that destiny's egg has been laid in our nest;
That we've climbed up the sides, up the roof, and sublime
We stand on the top of the ridge-pole of time.
The horizon's too narrow to limit our stride,
And infinite space is too small for our pride;
Heaven's vault is too small our hosannas to ring,
And the zenith too low for our gestures to swing;
Our heads are too tall for the low-studded sky,
And we call for "more room!" on the Fourth of July.

'Tis a day you expect that the orthodox bard
His poetical bunting will flaunt by the yard;
'Tis a time you expect his tumultuous Muse
To explode at the end of a sky-rocket fuse.

Still I venture to tempt the bold heretic's curse,
And tremblingly give my unorthodox verse.

For aren't we too old to be pleased, like the boys,
With glory and gunpowder, thunder and noise?
Too old to sit down in unruffled sedateness,
And muse on our grand and ineffable greatness?
The loud days of our national boyhood are over,
The barefooted freedom of dew and of clover;
And let us throw off, with the boy's outworn jacket,
The old day of rollic and revel and racket.
Those days are now passed; they will not come again.
We are men. Let us grapple the problems of men.

And as men, may we not, on the Fourth of July,
Some specks in our history's amber descry?
As the politic small boy will creep, on the sly,
To the side of the table that's nearest the pie,
So we press around—and the crowding is great—
To the luscious pie-side of the table of fate.
But the small boy will learn, as the swift years go by,
There are viands transcendently better than pie.

Let us look at the sum of our work 'neath the sun.
Have we yet done as much as the old past has done?
We have built our large cities of marble and brick;
But our Shakespeares and Platos are not very thick.
We have urged them to speak with the best of good-will;
But our Miltons are mute and inglorious still.
Our dawn has now passed, and the morning grows late;
But our absentee Angelos linger and wait.
Our hastening noonday encroaches on morn;
But our Darwins and Newtons have yet to be born.

From the dead buried past there are phantoms arise,
With scorn in the cavernous deeps of their eyes;
And they say, "We have searched for him, patient and far,
Through your broad-acred Land of the Evening Star.
We have called for him long; but his voice is still dumb.
Our brother still lingers; our peer does not come."

But we have had epics of mighty designs
On manuscript ruled with the longitude lines.
On a continent-manuscript, boldly and free,
We have written our epics in railroads; and we
Have worked out our dramas. Each act is an age;
And a land from the sea to the sea is our stage.
We have grappled with nature, and tamed her. The fen,
The swamp, and the forest, the wolverine's den,
The home of the bison, the haunt of the bear,
The thronged and the tall-towered cities are there;
And the nest of the serpent, the wild dragon-fen,
Resound with the shouts of the children of men.

Now the snake's hiss is hushed, and the wolf's howl is dumb,
Has the hour not struck for our poet to come?
Now our cables are laid, and our railroads are wrought,
Build us temples and fanes for the high-priests of thought.
Now our prairies by million-trod pavements are lined,
Build us highways that stretch to the frontiers of mind.

Now our cities are sown by sea, river, and glen,
Let us look for a harvest of epochal men;
Let us look for a Voice from the wilderness sent
To teach us a wise and divine discontent, —
Discontent at mere bulk, tossed by waves and by breeze,
With no pilot soul on the rudderless seas.
Let us look for great bards whose tones, fervent and strong,
Shall burst like the morn through our twilight of song;
Wise prophets, whose sky-lifted eyes are alight
With a gleam that is caught from the future's far height,
Who see through the fogs o'er the valley outspread
The sunburst of hope on the mountains ahead.
Is it not time to grow, in town, village, and glen,
A strong breed of men who are saviours of men?
Strong pioneer souls who shall blaze out the way
From the frontiers of night to the borders of day?
Shall not this maternal pure soil of the West
Foster sages and seers on its matronly breast?
Shall we not find once more, in these late years again,
The pride of old Homer, wise shepherds of men?

Let us beckon these men, with our favor and praise,
And giants shall grow in the earth in these days.

We are large, and our largeness there's none to deny;
But Fate calls, and who answers with brave "Here am I"?
Little Athens was small, but her soul still survives
With gifts of its graces in millions of lives;
But Scythia was large, and the long ages tread
On the answerless dust of her myriad dead.
Little Concord — great sons made this small village great;
Great Chicago — ah, well! We will listen and wait.

There is music, I know, that is hopeful and blithe
In the swing of the sickle, the sweep of the scythe;
In the lisp of the foreplane, the smith's anvil-peal,
In the roar of the mill, and the clash of its wheel;
There's a music that's timed to the rhythmical beat
Of the quick-step of Fate in the thunderous street;

There's a music that's played by the breeze and the gale
In the creak of the mast and the flap of the sail;
And there's something that smacks of an epical strain
In the clank of the engine, the sweep of the train.
This music, though mixed with the toilers' tired moan,
And mingled with heart-break too deep for a groan,
Is wrought out at length in an anthem sublime
That fills without discord the wise ear of Time.

But this is but prelude Fate's orchestra plays,
To the strains that shall come in the fulness of days;
For the age-lengthened rhythm beat out by the Fates
In the building of cities, the founding of states,
In the earthquakes of war, in its thunder and groans,
In the battles of kings, and the crumbling of thrones,
Is but prelude that's written by Destiny's pen
To herald an epoch of masterful men.

In that day we shall worship, by wisdom made whole,
Not greatness of bulk, but perfection of soul;
And the thought-millionaires with our full acclaim then
Will be wreathed and anointed the leaders of men.
And methinks our Great Fate, from the hills to the sea,
Has sent forth this call to the years yet to be: —

Bring me men to match my mountains;
Bring me men to match my plains, —
Men with empires in their purpose,
And new eras in their brains.
Bring me men to match my prairies,
Men to match my inland seas,
Men whose thought shall pave a highway
Up to ampler destinies;
Pioneers to clear Thought's marshlands,
And to cleanse old Error's fen;
Bring me men to match my mountains —
Bring me men!

Bring me men to match my forests,
Strong to fight the storm and blast,
Branching toward the skyey future,
Rooted in the fertile past.

Bring me men to match my valleys,
Tolerant of sun and snow,
Men within whose fruitful purpose
Time's consummate blooms shall grow.
Men to tame the tigerish instincts
Of the lair and cave and den,
Cleanse the dragon slime of Nature —
Bring me men!

Bring me men to match my rivers,
Continent cleavers, flowing free,
Drawn by the eternal madness
To be mingled with the sea;
Men of oceanic impulse,
Men whose moral currents sweep
Toward the wide-infolding ocean
Of an undiscovered deep;
Men who feel the strong pulsation
Of the Central Sea, and then
Time their currents to its earth throb —
Bring me men!

THE PRESS

[Read in response to a toast at the Tilton, N.H., Seminary Association, at the Hotel Thorndike, Boston, the evening of March 2, 1892.]

YOU'LL not expect stuff like the verse of John Milton,
From a solemn old bard who was tutored at Tilton;
But a meal is completer for any good eater,
If it's settled with song, and is rounded with metre.

Now you've had a good supper as prelude and proem;
You're in first-rate condition to stand a poor poem.
After meat for the eater 'tis meet that my metre
Should call the Muse down to our table and seat her.

My theme is The Press — that strong search-light inspector,

That exhibits all earth 'neath its calcium reflector.
It takes the whole planet to scour and scan it,
And tell kings and kaisers the right way to man it.

The man who peers into the mist-girdled mystery —
That fog-bank of fable we call ancient history,
Goes down in the hollow of old graves to wallow,
We call him a sage, and revere him a scholar.

But the press that writes history that's contemporaneous,
Makes the deed and narration almost simultaneous,
Deserves as high rating, as good compensating;
For the press writes our history while we are waiting.

It gives not the lore of the old ancient sages,
But it packs the whole world every day in eight pages.
We may hastily scan it, and praise it or ban it,
But the newspaper wrapper ties round the whole planet.

Its folds all the islands, and continents are curled in

A small two-cent journal we wrap up the world in.
'Tis a bundle worth trying, a package worth buying,
If a planet rolls out when we've done our untying.

LINES

[Read at the dedication of the Soldiers' Monument presented to the town of Candia, N.H., by Hon. Frederick Smyth, Oct. 13, 1893.]

THE broken nation, torn in twain,
Cried, in the torment of her pain,
"Oh, bring me men who dare to die,"—
And thousands answered, "Here am I."

"Come," cried the voice o'er hill and plain,
Cried with the thunder trumpet's breath,
"Who'll come to be cut down like grain,
Upon the harvest-fields of death?"
The voice came from an ominous sky,
And thousands answered, "Here am I!"

Then did the nation see arise
The hero breed that never dies;
Then did the world behold again
The strength of God that lives in men.

No monument our hands can raise
Can justly magnify their praise;

There is no praise can glorify,
No praise of tablet, tongue, or pen,
The soul that does not fear to die,
The man who dares to die for men.
All praise is but an idle breath
When whispered in the ear of death;

All eulogy an empty sound,
The ripple of an idle wave,
When uttered o'er the hallowed ground
That marks a soldier's grave.

Long since their lives have taken flight,
Their souls passed on into the night.

The babes they left behind them then
  Have grown to matrons and to men;
And children play about their knees,
  And listen while the tale is taught
Of years of mighty destinies,
  And how their fathers' fathers fought.

And this, our monument, we raise,
  Shall tell their tale to coming days,
And teach in the dark hours of need,
  Or when the threat'ning years draw nigh,
Men of the same strong-hearted breed
  To still be unafraid to die.
And while are hearts of equal worth,
  That love of land or glory stirs,
Freedom shall dwell upon the earth
  Amid her loving worshippers;
And rule in sceptred peace afar,
From rising sun to evening star,
A land untrod by foot of slaves,
But white with bloom on heroes' graves.

THE BIG FOUR AND THE LITTLE MAN

[Read before the Brown University Club of Providence at Annual Midwinter Banquet, 1895.]

THERE was a man — a mighty man —
  Who wrote a mighty grammar,
To be beat into children's heads,
  And knocked in with a hammer.
And if you wish for grammar lore,
  His book's the place to seek it;
It tells us how to speak our tongue
  The way we ought to speak it.
A learned book filled up with rules, —
  With rules of all conceptions, —
Ten thousand rules from all the schools,
  Ten million more exceptions.

There was a man — a mighty man —
  Who had a mighty "projik"
To write a great Compendium
  Of Universal Logic.
He told us how to range our facts
  In proper collocation,

To analyze and synthesize,
And keep from obfuscation.
By his advice the target truth,
By hot shot could be shot full;
He told us how to think our thoughts,
And make our thinking thoughtful.

There was a man — a mighty man —
A mighty rhetorician,
Who made a rhetoric that ran
Into the twelfth edition.
He taught us not to write like clowns,
Or any coarse clodhopper,
But how to write with elegance
Pre-eminently proper.
He told us how to write our thoughts
In true concatenation,
And fix and rig 'em up in style,
By rule and regulation.

There was a man — a mighty man —
Who made a contribution
To wisdom's great totality —
A work on elocution.
He told us how to throw our arms
To make our words emphatic,
And told us how to twist our mouths,
To make our speech dramatic;

He told us how to coo like doves,
  Or roar like any bison;
And told us how to throw our voice
  All over the horizon.

There was a man — a little man —
  A very little fellow,
Who used to stand upon the stand,
  Just stand right up and bellow.
He mauled and murdered rhetoric,
  Threw logic in confusion,
And broke all the commandments of
  The Book of Elocution.
He filled the palpitating air
  With universal clamor,
With cracked *débris* of rhetoric,
  And ragged shreds of grammar.

One day the great grammarian,
  And the great rhetorician,
And the great elocution man,
  Likewise the great logician,
Went down to hear this little man,
  This very little fellow,
To see him mount upon the stand,
  And then to hear him bellow.
Loud sneered the great grammarian,
  Pooh-poohed the rhetorician,

The elocution man was shocked,
And shocked the great logician.

But while they sneered, these learned men,
The ignorant congregation
Showed its tumultuous delight
In thunderous acclamation.

For, oh! this man — this little man —
This very little fellow,
Played on their fears and hopes at will —
A smile-or-tear-compeller.
For though he was a little man,
He was a mighty fellow,
And played upon men's heartstrings as
Upon a violoncello.

The people cried and clapped and wept,
And soon the rhetorician,
Grammarian, elocution man,
Likewise the great logician,
Were laughing just like common men,
Or crying just like women,
While through his sea of eloquence
The little man was swimmin'.
And loud haw-hawed and loud boo-hooed
These deep and learned fellows —
His hands were on their heartstrings, and
He played his violoncellos!

Now grammar's good, and logic's good,
And rhetoric's good and proper,
And elocution's excellent
To train the coarse clodhopper;
But this my little fable shows,
My little fable teaches,
The man with genius in his soul
All formulas o'er-reaches.
He breaks the rules of scribes and schools,
As fast as they can make 'em,
And grammar men and logic men
All go to hear him break 'em.

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